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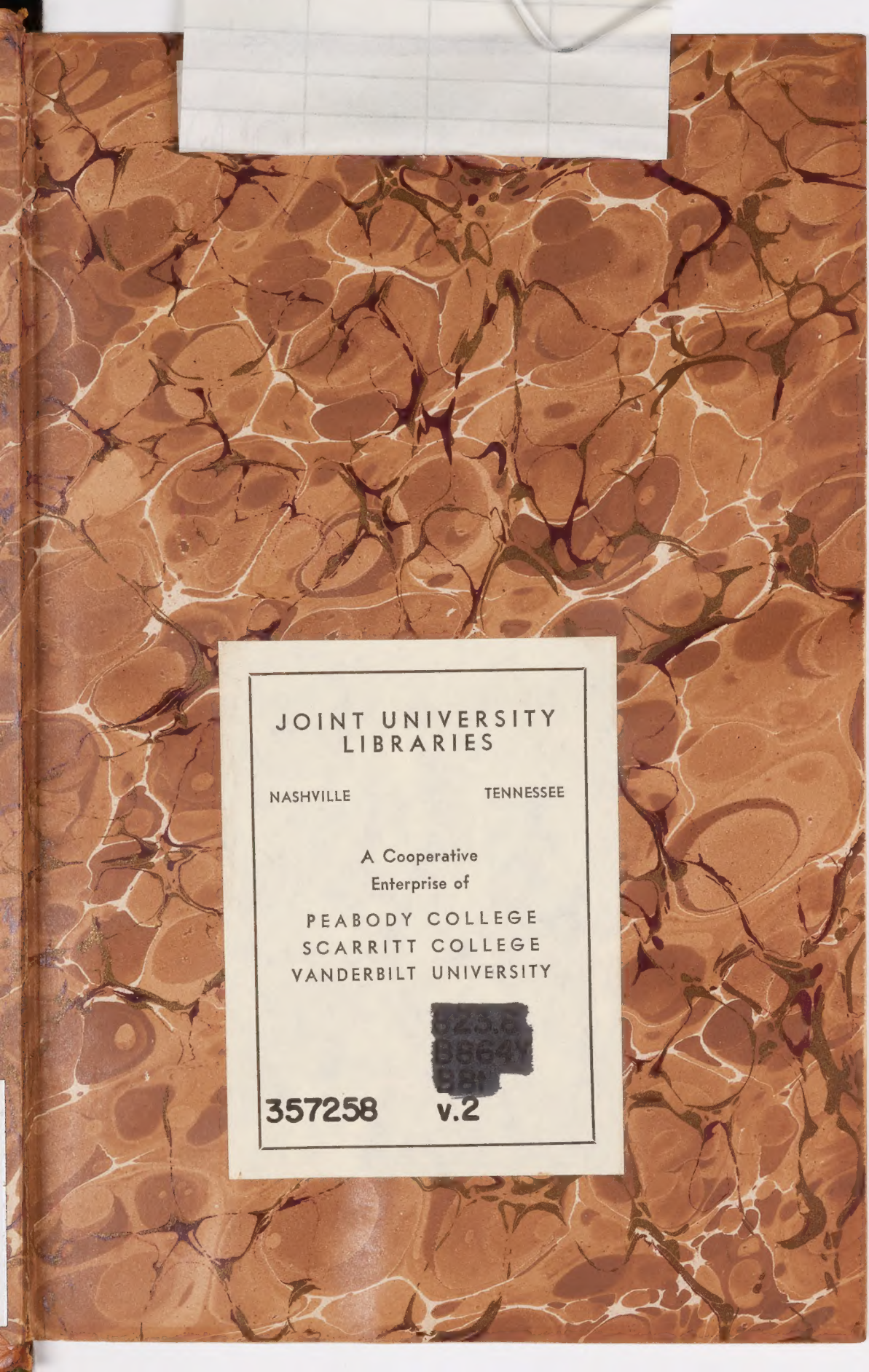
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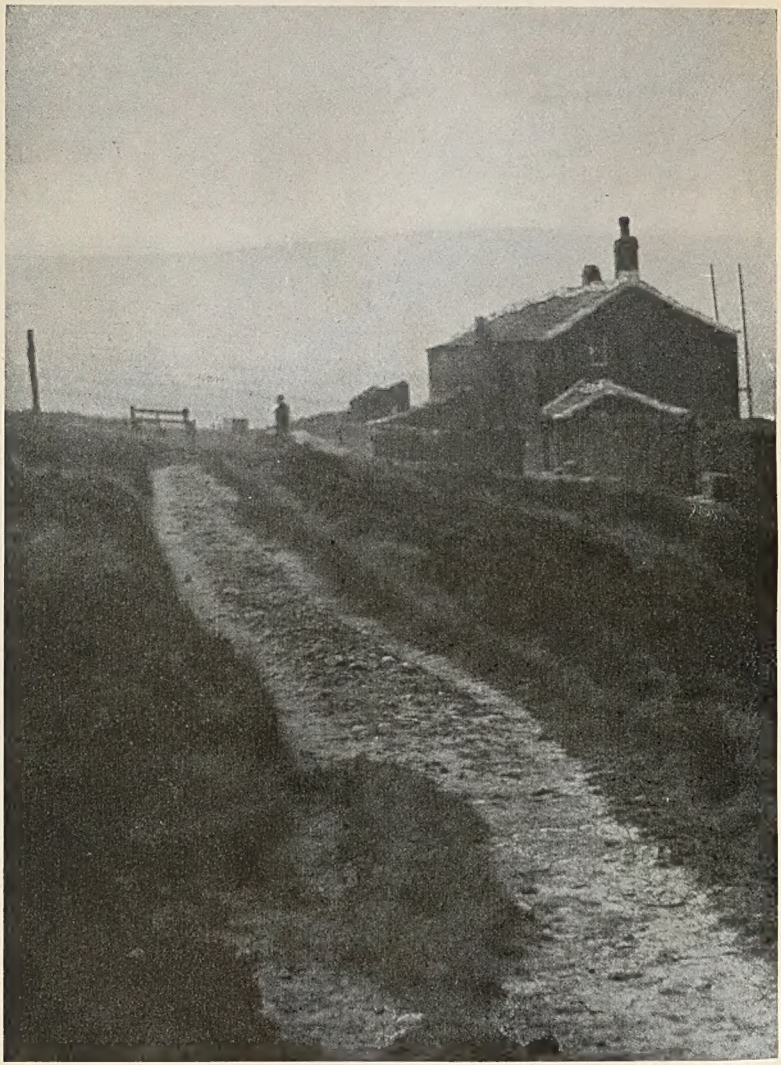

On Haworth Moor. *W. R. Bland.*

TRANSACTIONS

AND

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

OF

THE BRONTË SOCIETY.

EDITED BY

BUTLER WOOD, F.R.S.L.

VOL. II.

(PARTS IX. TO XV. INCLUSIVE).

PRINTED FOR THE SOCIETY BY

M. FIELD AND SONS, LTD., SOUTHGATE, BRADFORD.

JANUARY, 1906.

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PREFACE.

In view of the fact that the topographical aspect of the Brontë writings had occupied a large share of the first volume, it has been felt that the literary side should receive more attention in the subsequent proceedings. This intention has been carried out in the present volume, as will be seen from the contributions of Sir T. Wemyss Reid, Messrs. George Saintsbury, R. B. Haldane, Halliwell Sutcliffe, Richard Garnett, Edmund Gosse and other well-known writers.

The members are under considerable obligation to Mr. John Waugh, C.E., for bearing the cost of Part X., which contains reprints of articles by W. M. Thackeray and Miss Ellen Nussey. It is also embellished with reproductions of the wood blocks which appeared in Sir T. Wemyss Reid's "Monograph on Charlotte Brontë," a facsimile of one of Charlotte Brontë's letters, and other illustrations. We regret to have to record the death of the author of the Monograph. Sir T. Wemyss Reid took a deep interest in the Society's work; and his address on the Brontës, at Halifax in 1898, will long be remembered by those who were privileged to hear it.

We are indebted to Mr. W. R. Bland, Duffield, Derby, for permission to reprint the frontispiece to this volume.

B.W.

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PART IX.

TRANSACTIONS:

CONTAINING

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

AT HALIFAX AND HUDDERSFIELD,

AND

PAPERS READ BEFORE THE SOCIETY.

PRINTED FOR THE SOCIETY BY
M. FIELD AND SONS, GODWIN STREET, BRADFORD.

APRIL, 1899.

PREFACE.

This issue of the "Transactions," which forms the first part of the second volume, will, we hope, prove as interesting as most of its predecessors. It will be noticed that the contributions are more literary and less biographical or topographical in character than formerly, and as these two latter fields of inquiry have been so freely worked by Mr. Shorter and other recent investigators, it is not only desirable but necessary that the Society should devote more attention to the literary aspects of the Brontë writings than it has hitherto attempted. The papers included in the following pages will serve to indicate the lines on which it may be found desirable to travel in this direction in the future.

The Council wish it to be understood that the Authors of the various articles are alone responsible for the opinions expressed.

B. W.

April, 1899.

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FOURTH

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE BRONTË SOCIETY.

The fourth annual meeting of the members of the Society was held on Saturday afternoon, January 15th, 1898, in the Council Chamber of the Halifax Town Hall. In the absence of the President (the Right Hon. the Earl of Crewe), who had recently met with a serious accident whilst riding, the chair was occupied by Mr. J. J. Brigg, of Keighley. There was a numerous attendance of members.

The annual report, read by Mr. W. T. Field, the honorary Secretary, recorded the death of Mr. Alfred Newboult, who for eighteen months acted with the utmost zeal as Treasurer to the Society. The report also contained a reference to the death of Miss Ellen Nussey, who had passed away at the ripe age of eighty.

The Chairman remarked that the Society was now established on a strong and lasting foundation, and had aroused interest the wide world over. He also commented favorably on the suggestion that steps might be taken to form branches of the Society in the United States and in other lands inhabited by English-speaking races.

Mr. G. Parkinson (Bradford), in moving the adoption of the report, thought that as the Vicar of Haworth was leaving, there might be a chance of the Society acquiring the old parsonage before a new Vicar was appointed.

Mr. W. W. Yates (Dewsbury) seconded the resolution. He regarded Mr. Parkinson's suggestion as an admirable one. The Stratford-on-Avon committee owned Shakespeare's house; why could not the Brontë Society put themselves in a similar position?

Mr. J. Brigg, M.P., thought that if there were difficulties in the way of purchasing the house, the Society might, perhaps, obtain it on a long lease. He moved that the Council be instructed to ascertain the best means by which the Society could get possession of the parsonage.

Mr. Alfred Adam (Steeton Hall) seconded the resolution, believing that if the premises could be acquired, many more people would become subscribers to the Society.

The resolution was carried, and the report adopted. The balance-sheet, submitted by Mr. J. J. Stead, showing the Society to have £56 12s. in hand, was also approved.

Mr. W. W. Yates announced that it was the intention of the Rev. Canon Lowther Clarke, Vicar of Dewsbury, provided the necessary sum of money could be raised, to place a brass tablet to the memory of the Rev. Patrick Brontë in the Dewsbury Parish Church.

The meeting concluded with votes of thanks to the Chairman, and to the Halifax Corporation for the use of the Council Chamber.

In the evening a well-attended public meeting was held in the large hall of the Mechanics' Institute. The Mayor of Halifax (Mr. J. H. L. BALDWIN) presided.

The Chairman expressed regret at the absence of the Earl of Crewe. They sympathised with him in the accident that had befallen him. One object, he understood, of that gathering in Halifax was to awaken amongst the people of the district an interest in the Society. They were privileged to live close to the home of the Brontës. It was very often the case, however, that people who had interesting objects in their immediate district seldom went to look at them. Doubtless there were thousands of people in Halifax who had never visited Haworth. It was the way in this world never to fully appreciate our benefits until we were deprived of them. The object of a society like the Brontë Society was to collect such information and furnish such explanations as would deepen public interest in the Brontës and their books.

Sir T. WEMYSS REID (author of *Charlotte Brontë: a Monograph*, etc.) then gave a thoughtful and suggestive address on the Brontës, which was heartily appreciated by the audience. *(See page 8.)*

Mr. John Brigg, M.P., in moving a vote of thanks to Sir Wemyss Reid, described him as one of the first men of renown to appreciate the works of the Brontë sisters. If they took an interest in what Sir Wemyss Reid said and what he had written, and especially if they took a journey to the shrine of the Brontës and studied the surroundings they would experience a renewed pleasure in reading over again the precious works those gifted sisters had left them.

He well remembered those three interesting curates, introduced in *Shirley* as Mr. Donne, curate of Whinbury, Mr. Malone, curate of Briarfield, and Mr. Sweeting, curate of Nunnely, whose love affairs were so admirably described. He had met them several times; once in a house where there were also two very pretty girls, whose mother was exceedingly jealous of the curates. Though he was very young and innocent at the time he could not fail to notice the preparation that was made before the curates were announced. He remembered the dear old lady, in her imperious tone, ordering the girls to look quick and get upstairs out of the way. He noticed, too, how the girls lingered in the passage until it was actually too late to seclude themselves. He observed also that the three young gentlemen were in no hurry to leave the premises, but stayed as long as they decently could. It seemed to him that one of the curates might have eventually secured one of those young ladies, but fate ordered otherwise. The interest in the Brontë Society was being kept up. Over four thousand people had paid for admission to the museum during the past year, whilst many of the members had also visited the place.

Dr. J. Erskine Stuart seconded the resolution.

Mr. Cameron supported the resolution, and, as an old friend and colleague of Sir T. Wemyss Reid, he assured them that that gentleman's enthusiasm for the Brontës was no latter-day creation. Almost as soon as he was able to read he turned to the Brontë novels, and the present occasion was not the first time they owed a debt of gratitude to him for his labours in connection with the Brontë Society. He was no mere outsider to the Brontë cult. Although unable to be with them at the opening of the museum, Sir Wemyss forwarded the remarks he would have made on that occasion, and these formed one of the most precious of the series of *Transactions of the Society*. They owed much to Sir Wemyss Reid also for his *Monograph*, and the publishers would be well advised if they brought out a new edition of that work. It was still in active circulation in America.

Mr. J. J. Brigg also supported the resolution, which was carried with acclamation.

Sir T. Wemyss Reid gratefully acknowledged their thanks, and confessed he had not prepared anything in the shape of a lecture for them. A great many stories were told about the Brontës, and he would not attempt to "cap"

the one concerning the three curates. It was barely a month ago since he met in a London drawing-room a gentleman, still taking an active interest in life, who was not only the original of one of Charlotte Brontë's most famous characters, but whose name had been coupled with hers as the man she was "likely to marry."

An interesting lantern exhibition of Brontë views by Mr. J. J. Stead followed.

THE BRONTËS.

An Address delivered before the Brontë Society at Halifax, on January 15th, 1898.

By Sir T. Wemyss Reid.

It was with a certain measure of surprise that I learned from the announcements of this meeting that I was expected to deliver an address on the subject of the Brontës. My expectation had been that I was to take a less formal and less prominent part in the proceedings. I came here in part to acknowledge the compliment which was paid to me by the Brontë Society when I was made one of its Vice-Presidents, and in part to offer my apologies for my failure to attend the very successful gathering at the opening of the Brontë Museum in 1895, after I had undertaken to give the inaugural address. My inability to attend on that occasion was due to an attack of influenza, and I am sorry to say that a similar attack from which I have barely recovered has diminished considerably my powers of contributing anything of value to your proceedings this evening. I am, in fact, still so much of an invalid that I have felt it safer to commit to writing the few remarks with which I have to trouble you. It is some consolation to me to know that Charlotte Brontë herself, as her Life testifies, knew a good deal about the influenza scourge when it visited this country more than fifty years ago, and she at least would have been able to sympathise with a victim of that distressing malady. It is many years since I last addressed a Halifax audience, and curiously enough on that occasion, as on this, my theme was Charlotte Brontë. Whatever may be the case with others, I am proud to be able to say that this theme has had for me a lifelong charm. It is two and thirty years since I first wrote a magazine article describing a visit which I had just paid to Haworth.

At that time the Brontë shrine was but little visited, and those of us who felt the fascination of the Brontë story were comparatively few in number. But if we were then a weak and humble folk, we had certain compensations which are denied to those who make their pilgrimage to Haworth nowadays. We saw the village as it was seen by the Brontë sisters themselves; with hardly a change in its outward appearance from the days when Charlotte despatched the M.S. of *Jane Eyre* to the counting-house of Smith, Elder, and Co. We saw the old church in its integrity; were allowed to sit in the old-fashioned pew in one corner of which Charlotte spent so many placid Sabbaths, and to climb the steep stairs of the three-decker pulpit from which Mr. Brontë had preached so many manly and vigorous sermons. We could kneel at the altar rails at which Charlotte knelt as a bride, and at which her father stood when she followed her sisters to the tomb. Surely in this respect we early worshippers at the Brontë shrine were more fortunate than those who came after us. I have to confess to you to-night that I have never seen Haworth under its new aspect. I have never seen the church which has replaced that identified with the history of the Brontës. The only Haworth which I know is, I am happy to say, the Haworth which they knew. That which must strike all of us who are able to look back for some forty years is the extraordinary change which has taken place, not only in this West Riding, but throughout the world in the public appreciation of the Brontës. People of my age can remember the time when even in Yorkshire the name of the gifted sisters aroused conflicting emotions. Their neighbours and friends at Haworth had been somewhat afraid of them whilst they lived; and even after their tragical end they could not quite forgive them for having written books which did not always throw an absolutely pleasant light upon the features of the life they described. Do not let us blame these good people for having failed to realise all that they had once possessed in the genius of the Brontës. Do you suppose that if they had been our contemporaries rather than the contemporaries of our fathers they would have met with a different fate? I confess I doubt it. It takes the passage of years to ripen a good vintage. It needs a certain distance in space to enable the eye to realise the proportions of a Matterhorn or Mont Blanc. To be too close to a great genius is, as a rule, to be unable to appreciate it. Time and space are

needed for that. Instead therefore of casting stones at the past generation because it did not appreciate the Brontës, we ought rather to be thankful that we have been set at such a distance from them that we can see them aright. The apathy which prevailed so widely thirty years ago prevails no longer. Throughout the world of thought, wherever literary fame is recognised, and great genius properly appraised, the Brontës now hold their own in "the foremost file of Time," secure in the possession of a glory which you and I, at least, believe will never perish.

It was a happy thought which brought this Brontë Society into existence, for the purpose of concentrating and giving substantial body to the wide-spread sentiment of interest in the story and achievements of the family. The collection of relics associated with their names, the publication of transactions in which all phases of the Brontë cult are recorded, and such meetings as we are holding to-day, must not only stimulate the general interest in the fame of these great Yorkshire writers—the greatest our county has ever produced—but prove to future generations that in this case at least the prophets have not been without honour in their own country. But a Brontë Society, or any society which is devoted exclusively to one or two writers—and Charlotte and Emily were so closely associated that in some aspects they seem to be one rather than twain—is exposed to certain risks which, it seems to me, it may be useful to point out. I dare say all here have heard of the now practically defunct Browning Society. It consisted of a group of ardent and accomplished men and women who, being devoted students of Robert Browning's poetry, employed themselves in studying that poetry—not always very clear or intelligible—in order to arrive at the inner meaning of the poet's words. It was a thoroughly laudable work, and kept within proper bounds it could have done nothing but good. But the good people of the Browning Society were carried away by their passion for research, until at last they went to extremes which brought them into ridicule. In the ardent desire that no truth which had been taught by their hero should be lost, they insisted upon finding hidden meanings in lines which seemed to be fairly simple and intelligible to the common understanding; and at last Browning himself, after suffering much at their hands, was compelled to deal them a heavy blow. A correspondent appealed to him to know whether a certain passage in one of his poems had a particular

meaning not apparent on the surface. "I am sure that I don't know," was Browning's answer, "but if you ask the Browning Society I have no doubt they will be able to tell you." I do not suppose that there is any danger of the Brontë Society going wrong in this direction. We have not yet begun to analyse every passage in *Jane Eyre* or *Wuthering Heights* in order to discover some occult meaning hitherto unsuspected; and, happily, the exquisite simplicity and clearness of the language in which both Charlotte and Emily conveyed their thoughts to the world will leave but little room for the labours of investigators of the type of the Browning Society. But there is a danger—and I trust you will pardon me for venturing to point it out—that this Society may devote its attention too exclusively to the task of minute examination and investigation of small matters affecting the Brontës which are of little consequence to anybody. After all, we are not really any the better for knowing the colour of Charlotte's gowns or the names of the Haworth villagers with whom Emily occasionally exchanged a word in passing. No doubt even these little details have a certain measure of interest; but it is trivial, and I might even say contemptible, in presence of the interest which attaches to the moral character and the intellectual genius of the sisters. I hold that it is with these things that our Society ought chiefly to concern itself. It is because we believe that the life of Charlotte Brontë was a most noble one of self-sacrificing devotion to duty, and because we realise the fact that she and her sister, by their genius, shed lustre upon the literature of their country, that we are anxious to keep their names alive and their memories bright and untarnished by the passage of the years. It is our purpose, also, to stimulate the interest of our neighbours in literary effort by keeping ever before them the unique and splendid story of Haworth Parsonage. In that story there is not only inspiration for those who aspire to literary achievement, but a most noble and comforting stimulus for all who cling to the belief that a simple-minded devotion to duty will add lustre even to the most brilliant fame and the most glorious genius. If this continues to be, as I believe it has been in the past, the chief aim of the Brontë Society, then we may rest assured that it will live and prosper and do its work long after its founders have joined the Brontë sisters in their peaceful sleep. But if, on the other hand, we are to fall into the error of over-refinement, and are to hunt up every

little clue that may seem to have a bearing, however remote or trivial, upon the history of the family, we may expect two things at least. One is that a great many clues will be offered to us which are absolutely fictitious—like some of those absurd legends which have already been offered to the world by certain students of the Brontë history; and the other is that we shall by and by fall into the kind of popular contempt which proved fatal to the Browning Society. Forgive me if I am running counter to the views which some of you hold upon this question; but, having been asked to speak to you, I must be honest and speak out. The world is for the living, not the dead; and it is the living Brontës, the teachers who still instruct us by their words and inspire us by their virtues, that this Brontë Society should seek to honour; it is their living gifts and graces, not the mere dust which lies scattered about their tombs, that we shall find most worthy of study and preservation.

But I pass to what I think is a more congenial subject than the possible dangers which may lie ahead of us as a Society—I mean the undying fascination of the Brontë story. Some of us, as I have said at the outset, have felt that fascination for a lifetime. I can recall quite vividly the day, more than forty years ago, when I read the *Times* review of Mrs. Gaskell's noble memoir of Charlotte Brontë; and I still seem to feel the thrill of exultation with which I followed the bewitching story to the end. I remember how, twenty years later, when I began to write my own little book about the Brontës, and I saw spread out before me on my table in Leeds, the withered, time-stained letters which Charlotte's own hand had written, and which she had addressed throughout her life to Ellen Nussey, I was conscious of that feeling of reverential awe and delight with which the pilgrim kneels before the relics of the saint whom he adores. And never for a moment, during all the forty years on which I look back, has the Brontë story failed to make its same strong, subtle, but irresistible appeal to my inmost sympathies. It is so with all true followers of the Brontë cult. We might have been disposed to think that it was our nearness in geographical position to the scenes of the Brontë story and the Brontë novels that affected us. But it is not so; for whilst the West Riding now does such ample homage to the memory of its most distinguished children, wherever you go and into whatever class in society, you find that the Brontë admirers are

inspired by the same feelings. I hesitate to mention names, but I think I may be allowed to reveal to you members of the Brontë Society that there is no more enthusiastic appreciator of the authors of *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* than the late Prime Minister of England, Lord Rosebery; and I have heard that on the day after he resigned office in 1895, he wrote to a friend asking him to go and see him in order that they might have "a talk about the Brontës." We cannot pretend to analyse the exceeding charm which the Brontë story has for those of us who have once succumbed to its fascination; but many here must understand it, and all will know that whatever may be its origin, it is entirely wholesome in its nature. The other day a friend told me a new story illustrating the extent to which the sceptre of Charlotte Brontë can influence her admirers. Many years ago a very distinguished man, who afterwards became a most eminent Judge, was invited to dinner in order to meet two young ladies who had heard a great deal about his conversational powers. He duly went, but to the disappointment of the ladies he hardly spoke at all during dinner. On the contrary, his eyes seemed to be constantly cast down towards his knees, and his thoughts to be elsewhere. Years afterwards one of these ladies met the same Judge at a dinner-party at which he surpassed everybody else at table by the brilliancy of his conversation. After dinner she spoke to him in the drawing-room. "It has been such a pleasure to meet you again," she said, "because you have proved that after all you are as good a talker as people said you were. The last time I met you you were dumb." "When was that?" he asked, puzzled. She told him. "Oh," he replied, "I remember now. I was very rude that day, and must ask you to forgive me. Do you know what I did? I was in the middle of reading *Jane Eyre* when the dinner bell rang, and I could not lay it down; so I took the book into the dining-room with me, and secretly read it on my lap during dinner." I think that learned Judge, who succumbed so quickly to the fascination of Charlotte Brontë, would have made an admirable member of this Society. Bound together by our common reverence for great virtues and great genius, let us continue each in his own sphere to do what we can to preserve the memories of the Brontës, to render honour to their names, and in all humility to copy their example.

FIFTH

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE BRONTË SOCIETY.

On Saturday, January 14th, 1899, the fifth annual meeting of the Society was held at Highfield Assembly Rooms, Huddersfield. Mr. J. F. GREENWOOD, of Haworth, presided, and there was a good attendance of members.

Mr. W. T. FIELD (Bradford) the honorary Secretary, read the annual report, and Mr. J. J. Stead, the honorary Treasurer, having presented his balance sheet, Professor C. A. FEDERER moved that they be adopted.

Mr. W. W. Yates, in seconding the proposal, said he thought the time had come when the Society ought to be incorporated. The matter had been before the Council, and he thought it should now be taken in hand. The property of the Society had become valuable in more ways than one, and it was time they put themselves in a proper position.

The resolution was passed, and the Chairman said he had no doubt the matter mentioned by Mr. Yates would be brought before the Council, and would have due consideration.

The Rev. Canon Lowther-Clarke, Vicar of Dewsbury, proposed a vote of thanks to Mr. W. E. B. Priestley for his gift of a copy of Mr. Scruton's *Thornton and the Brontës* to each member of the Society, and said he read the book one evening, and found it to be extremely well written, to give details with which he was not before familiar, and to bring out portions of the Brontë life with which some of them were not fully acquainted. There was no undue laudation of Mr. Brontë or his children, and a very accurate description was given of the simple life they led. Injustice was done to the old man by Mrs. Gaskell, and though some words she wrote had been withdrawn, they had never yet lost their sting, and he found many people still regarding Mr. Brontë as a regular old tyrant, who made things unpleasant to his family and was unkind to his wife. Mr. Yates, of Dewsbury, had done perhaps as much as anybody, by local investigation, to make them see that Mr. Brontë's character was not as described by Mrs. Gaskell. A year ago they determined to perpetuate the memory of Mr. Brontë by a monument in Dewsbury Parish

Church, and only during the past week a memorial brass had been placed on the wall of the south aisle. He thought it would be pronounced by those who might go to see it a chaste and suitable monument of one who in past years was connected with the church.

The Chairman endorsed what Canon Lowther-Clarke had remarked as to the unkind things said of Mr. Brontë by many of the early writers. An uncle of his, who knew Mr. Brontë well, said many of the reports about him were quite untrue. Mr. Brontë invited his (the chairman's) uncle to become a Churchwarden, and when his uncle said he could not do so because he was a Nonconformist, Mr. Brontë said that did not matter, and that he wanted him as a personal friend to help in some useful parish works, one of which was the restoration of the tower of the church ; and his uncle became churchwarden.

Mr. J. Horsfall Turner (Idle) seconded the proposal, which was unanimously passed, and afterwards acknowledged by Mr. Scruton.

Mr. W. T. Field proposed a vote of thanks to Mr. John Watkinson for his services in rendering the visit of the Society to Huddersfield a success. Mr. W. Taylor seconded the proposal, which was passed unanimously.

Dr. Bruce moved a vote of sympathy with Mr. John Brigg, M.P., the first president of the Council, who was lying dangerously ill, and expressed the hope that he might be spared to come amongst them again. The resolution was seconded by Mr. J. J. Stead, and carried.

The Council was elected as follows:—Lady Morrison, Mrs. C. E. Sugden, Mrs. F. C. Galloway, Miss Cockshott, Messrs. J. J. Brigg, J. Caldwell, W. S. Cameron, C. A. Federer, J. F. Greenwood, L. Hainsworth, W. Jennings, P. F. Lee, W. E. B. Priestley, W. Robertshaw, Halliwell Sutcliffe, W. Taylor, J. Horsfall Turner, S. P. Unwin, J. Watkinson, and W. W. Yates. Mr. John Waugh was elected a vice president.

On the proposition of Mr. Watkinson, seconded by Alderman Denham, thanks were cordially voted to Mr. Greenwood for presiding, and after he had acknowledged it the proceedings closed.

There was a very good attendance at the evening meeting, the schoolroom being quite full. Mr. J. E. WILLANS, J.P., presided, and there were also on the platform Professor Saintsbury, M.A., LL.D., Professor of Literature at Edinburgh University; the Rev. Dr. Bruce, the Rev. Canon Bardsley, Councillor Ernest Woodhead, M.A., of Huddersfield; and other members of the Society.

The Secretary (Mr. Field) announced that Sir James T. Woodhouse, the borough member, was unavoidably prevented from attending, and the Mayor of Huddersfield (Alderman W. H. Jessop) had written saying that in consequence of having contracted a severe cold he would be unable, much to his disappointment, to take the chair at that meeting. Under the circumstances Mr. J. E. Willans, J.P., had kindly consented to take the position.

The Chairman said they would all regret the absence of the Mayor, and especially when they knew the cause of his absence. Sir James Woodhouse had also telegraphed to the promoters of another function in Huddersfield that evening that he was unable to attend owing to ill-health, and he (the speaker) was afraid they perhaps worked their public men too hard nowadays. He was exceedingly glad to have the opportunity of being present that evening, although he could not claim to have any qualification for presiding, except, perhaps, that he had the honour of being a member of the committee of the Huddersfield Free Library. It might be interesting to the audience to hear that when he called at the Free Library on the previous day he found that every volume of the two editions of works by the Brontës were in circulation—a hint which he hoped would be taken by some generous friend in the audience to supply them with a further edition. They were all as Yorkshiremen proud indeed that the Brontë family hailed from Yorkshire, and that their reputation was world-wide, and almost as ubiquitous as the Anglo-Saxon race.

Professor Saintsbury then gave an address on "The position of the Brontës as origins in the history of the English Novel" *(See page 18)*. This was followed by a paper containing some interesting reminiscences of the Brontës by the Rev. Canon Bardsley *(See page 30)*, and one by the Rev. Dr. Bruce on the poems of the Brontë sisters *(See page 37)*.

Mr. Joseph Woodhead, J.P., in proposing a vote of thanks to the speakers, said it had been a great privilege to listen to the three excellent papers on the celebrated Brontë family. They had had a professor from Edinburgh —a professor of literature who would not have been there to speak on the subject he had undertaken had the Brontës not occupied a high position in literature. The professor spoke of being only two years old when the first Brontë novels were issued. He (the speaker) was rather more than that, and he remembered the intense interest with which he read *Jane Eyre*. There had been some whisperings as to the writer of that book, and some contended that it could only have been written by a man, but when he got hold of a copy it so fascinated him that although he had had a hard and busy day he actually forgot to go to bed until he had read it through. Very near to Huddersfield was Roehead—a place where he believed Charlotte Brontë spent several of the pleasantest years of her life. They were indebted to the Brontë Society for the privilege they had enjoyed that evening, and he hoped that the fact of this year's annual meeting having being held in Huddersfield would be productive of benefit to the Society. Yorkshire had not too many literary celebrities that they could afford to under-estimate any of them, and now that the Brontës had linked Yorkshire with the highest literary fame, they would surely do well to keep alive that fame, and do all they could to spread a love of literature such as they had produced amongst the common people.

Mr. J. F. Greenwood seconded the resolution, which was heartily carried.

Professor Saintsbury responded. He remarked that he was pleased that the meeting at which the Society had requested him to speak had been held at Huddersfield, for although he knew a good deal about Yorkshire and its people, he knew less of the Huddersfield—or, as he might term it, the south-western portion of the county—than any of the other districts. The meeting had been a very pleasant one, and he was glad to have been there.

Councillor E. Woodhead moved a vote of thanks to the chairman, observing that he would like to make a practical suggestion as the outcome of that meeting. He was not going to suggest that they should form as it were an auxiliary branch of the Society. Perhaps the Council of the Society might consider it scarcely in place for him

to remark that there was a danger attending the formation of societies for the study of a single author—that they would be inclined to consider that author as a sun round which all other stars and planets moved. His suggestion would be that they should take a rather wider view of the literary heaven in Huddersfield, and that they might revive something of the nature of the Literary and Scientific Society which once existed in Huddersfield.

Mr. J. Horsfall Turner seconded the resolution, which was carried.

Mr. Willans then responded, and the meeting terminated.

THE POSITION OF THE BRONTËS AS ORIGINS IN THE HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH NOVEL.

An Address delivered at Huddersfield, before the Brontë Society, on January 14th, 1899.

By Professor Saintsbury, M.A., LL.D.

I have no quarrel with those who find that they are really helped in their appreciation of books by their enquiries into the experiences and characters of the men and women who wrote them, but it seems to me that this is certainly not always the case, and that the study of personal characteristics of authors does sometimes divert attention from their books, and does at other times introduce disturbing and discordant considerations in that study. It is hard to get anything like dry light on the subject of biography; hard even to get reasonable agreement about the most important points. Take, for instance, the two chief recorded personal judgments of Charlotte Brontë by very great men of letters—her contemporaries, the one a very few years older and the other a very few years younger than herself—Thackeray and Mr. Matthew Arnold. How astonishingly discordant these judgments are as to the temper and the character of Charlotte Brontë! Everyone, I hope, knows that exquisite *Roundabout Paper* of Thackeray's, originally published as introduction to the fragments of *Emma*, where the humour and pathos of the master show themselves mingled in their very choicest blend. The great satirist, whose knowledge of humanity

seemed to his friend Edward Fitzgerald something terrible, saw in the author of *Jane Eyre* first of all "an impetuous honesty," then "a noble indignation at wrong," and only "a somewhat excessive austerity of judgment." A very pure, lofty and high minded person he pronounces her, and he rises in defence of her to one of those rare but unmistakeable bursts of passionate enthusiasm, which to all but utter fools might have shown the folly of calling Thackeray a cynic. We turn to the younger judge. Mr. Arnold knew Miss Brontë and not only her books, for he had met her at Miss Martineau's. He says of *Villette* in a letter to his sister, Mrs. Forster, in April, 1853:—"Why is *Villette* disagreeable?" (One may answer "It isnt," but that would not be logical.) "Why is *Villette* disagreeable? Because the writer's mind contains nothing but hunger, rebellion, and rage; and, therefore, that is all she can in fact put into her book. No fine writing can hide this thoroughly, and it will be fatal to her in the long run." Alas! there was no long run, so we cannot tell whether Mr. Arnold was right here or not. And we know of course that he made noble repentance in verse afterwards. But he had (as we know from a former letter) talked to Miss Brontë about her Brussels sojourn and so was not speaking merely off the book. And observe further that there is though not a psychological truth, yet a certain critical truth about what he says to this extent, that if writers can only transcribe their own sensations and experiences they soon come to the end of their tether. But psychologically, and biographically, I at least have no doubt that he was quite wrong. Charlotte Brontë's mind contained a great deal besides hunger, rebellion, and rage. And note again how these unpleasant terms are only the reverse side, the unfavourable distortion and caricature of Thackeray's more just as well as more charitable attribution of "noble indignation," "impetuous honesty," "austere holiness and passion for truth." And these colours of good and evil—to use the old phrase—affect all biographical descriptions and estimates, while purely literary criticism ought to be, and can be, almost entirely achromatic, adjusted to nothing but the positive literary merit of the work.

There are no doubt many here present who know far more than I do about the family and individual history of the Brontës, who can give more details about the production of their work and who, perhaps, can trace and explain allusions and origins in the novels far better. But

I doubt whether there are any of my own age who were acquainted earlier with at least some of their works. I read *Jane Eyre* so early that I never seem to have read it for the first time. It forms part with other things of a sort of primary stock of reading with which I seem to have started. And the others followed certainly before I was fourteen or fifteen. I did not meet with the poems so early. It was not, I think, till in my first year at Oxford my tutor set me Emily's *Remembrance* to turn into Latin elegiacs. But even that is thirty-five years ago, and I should think my knowledge of the prose must be nearer forty years old. Now there is a certain well-known saying about old friends, old wine, and old books, and in the case of the books, at any rate, and the friends, it can never be truer than of these that have grown up with us that are only old—though it be mere youth for books—positively as we are old ourselves. Familiarity makes love more delightful, as the Roman poet says in a spirit, I think, nobler than that of an adage of our own, and certainly more cheerful; though Lucretius is not generally quoted as a model of cheerfulness. It would be ridiculous, of course, to pretend to having at so early an age discovered in the Misses Brontë's work those peculiar qualities of originality on which I wish to dwell to-night. A boy of thirteen, or even of eighteen, would be an unnatural monster if, without having them pointed out to him, he saw such things—and at that time there were very few to point them out. But I think I always felt more or less dimly that there was something in the work of "Currer Bell," something else in that of "Ellis," which was not present at all in the great older novelists, which was still less to be found in the ordinary novels—the *Emilia Wyndhams* and so forth—of the middle of the century; and which if present at all in the great new novelists, from Thackeray to George Eliot, was present in quite a different way. And when I began to consider English literature critically it was not long before I began to find this out. But it was very long before I found that Charlotte herself had in one place put her own and her sister's differentia, not indeed quite completely or as a literary historian would have put it, but with an acuteness and correctness not universal or common in the case of authors writing about their own work. This explanation is to be found in the preface only posthumously published which she wrote for *The Professor*, when she thought of publishing it in her

lifetime. And the complement of it, the part which she has not explained, is to be found even in *The Professor* itself, though not so fully as in her other work. Indeed, it is as usual from the work and not from the author's observations about the work, that we are to derive real information.

If we look back to the time when *Jane Eyre* was growing into shape, we shall see that the history of the English novel, though for more than half a century busy enough, was a very short one, and that it had as yet had only two periods of undoubted brilliancy and genius—that of the four great eighteenth century novelists from 1742 and *Pamela* to 1770 and *Humphry Clinker*, and that of Scott and Miss Austen in the teens and twenties of the nineteenth. Each of these has indeed been followed by a time of stimulated and extensive production with work like Miss Burney's in the first case, like James's and Bulwer's and Marryat's in the second; while for a decade before the appearance of *Jane Eyre* the exceptional and eccentric star of Dickens had been shining brightly enough. But it is of the first importance to remember that even Thackeray in his complete and authoritative work preceded Miss Brontë by but a very little, and that Reade, Kingsley, Trollope, Miss Evans, though her elders or very little her juniors, did not precede her at all. And having laid down these fixed points securely, let us then proceed to enquire what were the characteristics of the schools of novels and novelists which were really before her—with which she was, or might have been, acquainted. Let us see how much of the novel country they had covered, surveyed, and effectively occupied, as also what they had *not* covered and had left for her or for others to explore and to settle.

We need not say very much of the great original school of the English novel, except that both its merits and its defects were conditioned by the century in the very heart and midst of which it arose. It is scarcely a parodox to say that no century is ever fairly judged till its successor is wholly past—sometimes not till much later—but at any rate some critics have already succeeded in taking a juster view of the eighteenth century than it held of itself or than the nineteenth century has usually held of it. It was unrivalled for knowledge of human nature in general and on broad lines, but it did not understand the eccentric and the bizarre, and though it could both observe and analyse

very minutely, it always preferred types to individuals, the normal to the abnormal. Nothing could have been more fortunate for laying the foundations of that youngest development of literature, prose fiction. English humour and English idiosyncrasy made it certain beforehand that the views taken would not have the arid and stereotyped uniformity which was the curse, for instance, of the great French drama. But if this humour, this idiosyncrasy, had at first and in the very infancy of the novel sought by-ways and intricacies, exceptions and abnormalities, no great literary kind could ever have resulted. As it was, Richardson with his minute analysis, Fielding with his unerring creation of character, Smollett with his picturesque variety and sarcastic observation, even Sterne himself with his calculated buffoonery and sentimentality, never went out of the general specifications of humanity and left handlings of it which are never likely to be surpassed, if in Fielding's case at least they can ever be equalled. The broad lines, the general principles of the novel, were thus settled once for all, but there was room for endless variety and filling up. Again these writers—still under the pressure of their atmosphere—attempted to give a romantic turn to their novels, but within the limitations of a distinctly conventional form of romance in which the missing heir, the wicked guardian, the unprincipled lover, the beautiful heroine with a fortune, the elopement, the abduction, played mock parts without a suspicion that they could ever lose relish. Except in Sterne, who is in reality not so much a novelist as a miscellanist in humour with a marvellous command of novel character, the stories cling to the old epic dramatic line of evolution and discovery with an almost touching fidelity, to which we must add that the enormous change of manners does, to all except those who by study have got above it, probably affect these novels to a very great degree. There was in this respect a greater revolution between the death of Dr. Johnson and the birth of Miss Brontë, a period of little more than thirty years, than there has been from the later date to the present time, which is a period of more than eighty. "Other times other manners" is a famous proverb, but "other manners other novels" is perhaps an even truer assertion. And in no two sets of books is the difference better shown than in those of Miss Austen and of Miss Brontë herself—books written in some cases at least in less than thirty years' interval and to a certain extent

belonging to no very different class of novel except in spirit. In fact, the manifesto of *The Professor* which I noticed just now is rather truer, or at least more completely true, of *Pride and Prejudice* than it is of *Jane Eyre*.

But if only because the style and the manners are more modern, we notice the difference as compared with the Brontë novels hardly less, perhaps even more sharply, when we come to the great writer just mentioned, and to her still greater contemporary, Sir Walter Scott. The advance to which these two enabled the English novel—and the English novel, remember, has both in Scott's case and in Richardson's earlier, given tone and cue to the novelists of the world—was indeed enormous. But it was in each case, and almost necessarily, a one-sided advance. I am certain that Sir Walter could if he had chosen, written what is called a novel in the strict sense, that is to say a story, the interest of which depends, if on incident at all, on incident much less than on analysis of character and felicities of dialogue and description. There are all the constituents of this kind of novel in his books, even to that philosophic ability which the denser kind of critic denies him. But he did not choose to do it; it was not his vocation to do it. His mission was to create the mighty kind of the historical novel, in creating it to strike out a new variety of romance, and in striking out that new variety to borrow the attractions of national life and to use them in fashioning individual character as nobody but Shakespeare had done in the latter point and as nobody at all had done in the former. And he carried that mission out with absolute triumph. He peopled that spiritual world of familiar faces and places, the entrance for which had hitherto been almost a strict monopoly of the poets and the playwrights with personages and scenes introduced by a new door—the door of prose fiction, and the population and the scenery that he thus added to the mind, was greater again than anyone, except Shakespeare, could claim as his. But neither his own tastes nor perhaps the circumstances of his time—for remember that Scott was born thirty years back in the eighteenth century—allowed him, or at least induced him, to anticipate the later compound of novel and romance except in one instance, *St. Ronan's Well*, which is not of his very best days, and in which he was hampered by injudicious advisers. Nor did his followers, in the twenty years which passed between the appearance of the first books of Ainsworth and

James and Bulwer and that of *Jane Eyre*, conquer the province which was waiting for the nineteenth century novelist. Bulwer came nearest, but that curious adaptable, rather than originative, genius of his waited for patterns, and was for a long time too much under the influence of Byronism. The others were historical romancers merely and, in the absence of Scott's genius for character and the minor constituents of the novel, they too often allowed their books to be simply books for boys. Others, like Marryat and Lever who applied the picaresque manner of Le Sage and Smollett to the matter supplied by the great Revolutionary wars, were still less likely to hit on the true blend; others again, like Theodore Hook, merely wrote farce or melodrama in prose. The whole of the romantic side of the novel of 1825-45 was, except in military, naval, or sporting adventure, deficient in realism; it had broken loose from certain conventions and generalities only to fall into others; it could not do without exciting incident, uproarious horseplay, two cavaliers on horseback, and all the rest of it.

On the other hand, if we turn to Scott's only compeer in his own day or for long afterwards, we find the very oddest complement and contrast at once. As with all his power of exact observation he hardly ever touched reality without a strong romantic admixture, and as a rule dwelt in romance pure and simple, so Miss Austen eschewed romance itself utterly and totally. Perhaps the silly extravagances of the terror-school and the *Minerva Press*, which she satirises so pleasantly in *Northanger Abbey*, had disgusted her. It is fair to remember that her novels represent a much earlier stage than Scott's, and were to a great extent written before the close of the eighteenth century But I should think it much more philosophical to put down this abstinence as a genuine result of temperament. Hers, though not at all unamiable, was intensely satiric. There is more of pure ironic, satiric quality in Miss Austen than in any other woman who has ever written and almost more than in any Englishman, except some four or five with Swift at their head; while hers is differentiated from his by the absence of passion and indignation. Her creative power, if limited in range—and we must remember that as she never tried anything outside this range we cannot say that she would have failed out of it—was in the same way the equal of any one's, but it was under the strictest control. In fact, in certain ways Miss Austen is

much more a quintessence of eighteenth century observation and knowledge of human nature than a product of the nineteenth. Only the rough and rather conventional romance of eighteenth century fiction and the license of its manners and morals have dropped out of her work, as they were dropping, if not actually dropped, out of life. There are no more wicked baronets hovering round the angelic heroine with thoughts intent on forced matrimony or something worse. There is one elopement in *Mansfield Park* and some hints of irregularities of conduct in *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice,* but otherwise the incidents are of a most ordinary character and the sentiments such as may be produced in the presence of any young person. So much so is this the case that as you know Charlotte Brontë herself and others looked down on her great predecessor and teacher, while the gushing ones of the century have not hesitated to call the books dull, a most fatal error, but one for which there are shadows and rudiments of excuse. Just as it was Scott's mission to exhalt the romance, to refound it, to give it the huge extensions and possibilities of the historical novel, so it was Miss Austen's to reduce the novel proper to almost its simplest terms, to show what could be done with an absolute minimum of romantic interest by the aid of exact character-creation and appropriate dialogue. In the circle of each no imitator has ever trod with perfect mastery, but round these two circles they each opened up vast new regions which have been cultivated ever more and more since.

Now what was left to be done—and what, as I believe, was first done by the Brontë sisters, and especially by Charlotte--was the achievement of the intersection of these circles of the romance proper and the novel proper, of the maintenance of the rule of exact and, as we now say, realistic observation, of ordinary personality, of middle-class rank, of fairly usual incident, but the addition to these of the saturation of them with a new romance, a romance derived partly from the study of nature and partly from the working out of the passionate thoughts and feelings of the individual.

In considering for a few moments how this was done, we may neglect the work of Anne, admittedly the feeblest of the three, and not possessing any quality which is not shewn to much better advantage in that of her sisters.

But *Wuthering Heights* and the four novels of Charlotte, though their total extent is not very great, give us practically all we want. In *Wuthering Heights* itself the actual combination of the normal and the abnormal, of realism and trancendentalism, is shewn perhaps more strikingly than anywhere else; and it is no doubt in this very combination, presented as it is in a sort of native fashion, fresh from the soil, unrefined, unhandled, undrugged in any way, that the still unrivalled attraction of the book consists. But Emily Brontë was, after all, rather a poet than a novelist, and in this book, which is at once first effort and single attempt, it would be unreasonable to expect perfection of the method or indication of its general applicableness. Despite the intense reality of much of the scenery and of such characters as Joseph and the elder Catherine, the thing is on the whole rather too unearthly; the never explained origin of Heathcliff and some other points leave it too close upon the confines of the fairy tale, and there are many other technical drawbacks. If *Wuthering Heights* had stood alone it would have continued to be more or less alone—a kind of "sport," as botanists say, in the mid-nineteenth century, as Beckford's *Vathek* is in the late eighteenth, a wonderful and isolated *tour-de-force* very unlikely to be in any way germinal, to found a school, and still more unlikely to revolutionise or at least herald the revolutionising of the novel generally.

What should have been its companion, Charlotte's *Professor*, though a very much weaker book, is more in the direct line of progress. Here there is, as far as incident is concerned, nothing abnormal at all, and yet the book, for all its immaturity, is almost as far as *Wuthering Heights* itself from the common run of the time. Its faults, though very different from those of the other—faults of defect rather than of excess—are quite as obvious. When we get the reversal of the presentation in *Villette*, when Lucy Snowe has left off masquerading in the coat and trousers of William Crimsworth, we see what a mistake the original metamorphosis was; while the double or ten-fold dose of passionate interest in the later and larger novel shows the artist's consciousness of something lacking in the smaller and earlier one. Yet there is no doubt at all that she had dimly, if not clearly, seen her method in the *Professor* itself. She had realised that her immediate mission, and the immediate mission of her generation of novelists, was to take ordinary character and incident and make it extra-

ordinary, by analysis of motive, by dexterous infusion and representation of passion, by skilful use of nature, by all the heightenings, all the transcendencies which are not really far from anyone of us, though it may be but a few avail themselves thereof, though most may ignore and shrink from them. She gave those heightenings, those transcendencies, in her three great books, always binding them in the straitest fashion to her own personal experiences. It has been questioned whether she could have gone much beyond these experiences for the stuff of any future books. Perhaps she could not. Certainly she did not.

Now the interesting question from the point of view of literary history is "Where did she get these heightenings, these transcendencies? From whom did she get them?—not in the vulgar sense of borrowing, still less of plagiarising, but in the honourable one of inheriting and applying them." Nor is the answer difficult. She got them from the poets of the generation immediately preceding her own. Always, and in the most interesting fashion possible, poetry precedes prose. It precedes it at first in the most absolute and universal, if also the most commonplace sense, inasmuch as in all literatures verse is the old and original form, prose the newer, later, more backward. But in the later stages the precedence is of a more fascinating kind than this. Poetry explores the regions, tries the methods, inaugurates the kinds; prose follows. We must have—to keep to our own language only—the magnificent poetic outburst of the Elizabethan time before we can get the almost equally magnificent prose of Taylor and Browne. We must have the sense and force and discipline of Dryden before we get the Augustan and Georgian prose; the outburst of romantic poetry in the first quarter of the present century, before we can get the ornate prose of Wilson and De Quincey and Landor. Especially is it necessary for prose fiction—the youngest in any fully developed form of all literary kinds and the nearest to poetry in matter—to draw its methods, its embellishments, its reinforcements from poetry itself. The poetry of the generation from Coleridge to Keats had to be assimilated before the prose fiction of the generation which succeeded could be fully equipped.

And what are the main characteristics of that poetry? First, the direct uncompromising unconventional study of nature; secondly, the passionate and imaginative presentation of the feelings, the thoughts, the dreams of

the individual man. The eighteenth century has not, as is sometimes erroneously said, neglected nature altogether. It had only insisted on conventionalising and generalising it. No century ever has known man in general much better than the eighteenth century, and few so well. But you must take him in averages; and as it was not proper for him to be eccentric, fantastic, idealist, so you must not be any of these things in representing him. All this, of course, the greatest of the early nineteenth century poets deliberately rebelled against. Coleridge turned the visible world into a phantasmagoria; Wordsworth into the subject of almost pantheistic meditation and interpretation; Shelley into a melodious mystery of sheer beauty; Keats into a more sensuous harmony of soft sounds and gorgeous colours. And all the four in their different ways gave the meditations, the imaginations, the dreams of the individual, not the conventions or the reductions to a common denominator of a society or of "the town."

Miss Brontë followed them. She used, we are told, to puzzle her school-fellows at Roe Head by her admiration of shadows, peeps of sky, patches and pools of water. When she began to write seriously her landscape is one of her most important points. I am not, as you will have seen already, at all likely to depreciate Miss Austen, and I think Charlotte's words about her to Lewes (it is true she was angry at the time) a proof of something lacking in her critical faculty. But if you want to see clearly what as a result of time, I think, quite as much as of temperament Miss Brontë had and Miss Austen had not, compare two not wholly disimilar scenes—the walk of Marianne and Margaret Dashwood on the hills in *Sense and Sensibility* and Caroline's words to Shirley about Nunwood. In both the object is to represent a girl's delight in open air and natural scenery. But the one author barely gives the fact and the other gives a vision of the fact. When we pass from what the great prophet and dictator of the eighteenth century itself used contemptuously to call "prospects" to humanity, the gain is perhaps more one sided, the methods of the nineteenth century are more double-edged. When you avowedly and deliberately attempt the abnormal you will sometimes seem only to have achieved, and occasionally you will in reality only achieve, the unnatural. But on this point there is no need to dwell. All I wish to insist upon is that Miss Brontë—that her sister Emily in an even intenser fashion, though with still narrower range—did use

these two great heighteners of fictitious treatment—the poetical imaginative study of nature and the dramatic presentation of the individual on his most individual side; that they did this in following, conscious or unconscious of, the great poets just before them; and that nobody had done, that hardly anybody except one of these poets themselves could have done, anything of the same kind before.

It is not then, I think, rash in substance or disproportionate in expression to say that what Emily and Charlotte Brontë did was to effect the union of realism and of dream in the English novel. The best poetry is always more or less dream. It never gives you the fact only, but something beyond and above the fact, suggested by it, coming from it, but not *it*. The best prose merely as such gives you the fact only, or the fact with no additions except those calculated to bring out the writer's sense of the fact, its relations, bearings, conditions. Drama and fiction stand in these respects between the two; and when reading is once established the novelist has even the advantage of the dramatist in the way in which he can combine his appeals so as to blend imagination or suggestion with the strictest observation and reproduction of the actual. But in so late found an art as that of prose fiction—an art, too, the first consumate examples of which were produced at a time and in a country the tendency of which was certainly rather towards prose and fact than towards poetry and dream—the full estates of the novel could not be conquered for it at once. Their acquisition was further postponed by the fact that the first great novelist, the greatest still of the nineteenth century, was master of either harmony and could take refuge in poetry when he chose to be poetic. Scott himself, if only by the insertion of such a passage as Wandering Willie's Tale in such a book as *Redgauntlet*, may be said to have shown the way here also. But it was not fully followed up. It was not explored, in the sense not merely of putting imaginative episodes in a novel but of saturating the novel with the imaginative element throughout, until these daughters of the moors discovered in them once more the secret of heather-ale, the intoxication of wild nature, the charm of brooding solitary thought and feeling. Of course, when they found it, it was "in the air" and about to be found generally. No man, not Shakespeare or Dante, has the absolute monopoly of his own discoveries and achieve-

ments. But they were the first to show the secret in operation. That they had their faults and their limitations is perfectly true, and there are proper times and places for dwelling on these. But this is neither the place nor the time. We are here entitled to attend to the credit side only—with no exaggeration but omitting to strike a balance which can be justly held over—the positive achievement of these girls, their positive rank in English literature, and the history of the English novel.

CHARLOTTE BRONTË.

A Paper read at Huddersfield, before the Brontë Society, on January 14th, 1899.

By the Rev. Canon Bardsley, Vicar of Huddersfield.

The names of Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell have been "household words" in my family from the days of my boyhood. As I have only time to speak of Charlotte Brontë, I will say at once that while I have a profound admiration for the genius of the *writer*, I have a feeling almost akin to veneration for the character of the *woman*. Her life was for the most part a tragedy, and yet her submission to the Divine will never failed. To quote the words of Sir James Kay Shuttleworth, she was "a Christian heroine who could bear her cross with the firmness of a martyr saint."

When I think of Charlotte Brontë forging in the workshop of her imagination such works as *The Professor* and *Jane Eyre*, *Shirley* and *Villette*, and when I recall the many sorrows of her life, I am reminded of that island in a far distant ocean where the rain falls almost continually and yet, and because of this, where the traveller discovers such a marvellous tropical vegetation that he forgets in his delight that it has been produced under a canopy of mist and darkness and gloom. It is one of the great characteristics of genius to rise above its surroundings and create for itself an ideal world.

From the fact that Charlotte Brontë was the child of Celtic parents—on the father's side Irish, on the mother's, Cornish—we should expect her by the law of heredity to be endowed with a vivid imagination, and yet to my mind that does not account for the production of a *Jane Eyre* or a *Villette*. With the advent of these works the world had the

assurance that a star of the first magnitude had appeared in its literary firmament. I will not presume, even if this were the occasion, to draw that mysterious line which separates consummate talent from genius. Genius cannot be the product of evolution. After 300 years there has been no advance upon Shakespeare—the climax, and the sublimest development of all earthly genius. I remember the sister, Emily Brontë, a kindred spirit, while I venture to assert my belief that the genius of Charlotte Brontë was, as it is in the case of each individual possessor, a new creation, a flame kindled from the altar-fires of heaven by the "Father of lights." The poet Akenside thus traces its origin when he sings

> From heaven my strains begin, from heaven descends
> The flame of genius to the chosen breast.

I recall Sir Walter Besant's tribute to *The Cloister and the Hearth;* I do not forget *Scenes from Clerical Life*, *Romola*, and *Cranford*, and the works of Jane Austen; I think of Stevenson's marvellous creations—and yet I say that for virile vigour and intense realism, for fierce glow and fire of imagination, Charlotte Brontë, like Joseph's sheaf, stands head and chief in the midst of the field of imaginative literature.

(I would say, in passing, that if we want to know Currer Bell, the *author*, we shall find her in her many letters to Mr. Williams. If we want to make the acquaintance of Charlotte Brontë, the *woman*, we shall meet her in her correspondence with Miss Nussey.)

As we in Huddersfield live on the edge of the Brontë country, some of you may be interested to know that Charlotte might, but for one thing, have lived for a time almost in our midst. In a letter dated November 12th, 1840, she writes:—

> Mrs. Brook and I have interchanged letters. She expresses herself pleased with the style of my application—with its candour, and I took care to tell her that if she wanted a showy, elegant, fashionable personage, I was not the man for her, but she wants music and singing.

In a succeeding letter she speaks of Mrs. Thomas Brook. In each instance the name is spelt without the final "e." From a letter which I have received from Mr. William Brooke I learn that the person indicated was his mother. At Northgate House Charlotte Brontë would have found a home congenial to the "finest fibres" of her heart.

Mrs. Gaskell and Mr. Clement Shorter both state that the Rev. Patrick Brontë sought the assistance of a colleague in clerical work in 1838. The Vicar of Haworth offered a Title to Holy Orders to my father at the close of 1833, or very early in the succeeding year. My father was to serve without stipend for two years. It is difficult at all times to live upon nothing, and especially—if I may be guilty of a Hibernianism—in a moorland district provocative of a keen and healthy appetite. He was about to agree to this proposal, as Titles were difficult to obtain in those days, had not the Archbishop of York intervened. At the last moment, the Rev. Theodore Dury, Rector of Keighley—named in Miss Branwell's will as one of her executors—offered a Title with a substantial stipend. I mention this because an acquaintance having been formed with the Brontë family, my father and mother, in their early married life, used often to walk to Haworth Vicarage on Saturday afternoons in time for tea. My father was not a clergyman after the type of the curates in *Shirley*. If a son may eulogise his parent, I would add that he was a man of vigorous intellect, strong not only in its concentrative but also in its expansive force; he was also endowed with a peculiarly sympathetic nature. Hence he took the keenest pleasure in the interests and pursuits of each member of the Brontë family. Charlotte Brontë, as a girl of twenty, was a keen politician; and as he was, I am afraid, a sad Radical at the time, and she a Tory of Tories—as he glorified in the Reform Bill, and she looked upon it as a disaster—they had some very lively discussions.

My father's description of Charlotte Brontë's personal appearance reminds me of Dorothy Wordsworth's description of Coleridge :—"At first I thought him very plain, that is for about three minutes," and then, pourtraying his separate features, she adds, "if you hear him speak for five minutes you think no more of them." The author of *Villette* was very shy to the world, from which she was so isolated, but in conversation with her friends, as well as in writing, the charter of her genius was openly displayed. I may say that my father's estimate of Branwell Brontë's abilties was much higher than the one formed by Mr. Clement Shorter in his admirable work. He knew him at his best. The shore of human life is strewn with no sadder wreck than that of one to whom the very gifts of heaven were fatal.

I can only make a passing reference to a visit of two days which my parents paid to Haworth Parsonage, some

years after they left Keighley A year or two before my aged mother died, when we were talking over the past, I asked her what struck her most about Charlotte Brontë on the occasion of this visit. She answered, "Charlotte's careful thoughtfulness for the comfort of her guests, and the order and method with which she arranged every domestic detail." What Archbishop Trench said of Shakespeare is true of her:—"Assuredly we owe him much for the connection which he has shown may exist between the loftiest genius and the most perfect sober-mindedness. It has for ever rendered absurd the notion that genius is of necessity irregular, unable to acquiesce in the ordinary conditions of human existence, or cheerfully to adapt itself to them. He shrank from no humblest duty of daily life." Charles Kingsley noticed this feature in the character of Charlotte Brontë in a letter which he wrote to Mrs. Gaskell, complimenting her on her biography of the great novelist. He says, "It will shame literary people into some stronger belief that a simple, virtuous, practical home-life is consistent with high imaginative genius."

In my early manhood, I accompanied my father to Haworth after the death of Charlotte Brontë. Whilst my father was in the bedroom of her aged parent, who was seriously ill, and whilst Mr. Nicholls was in the Parish, I went through the library of the gifted authoress; specially noted *Vanity Fair* and *Esmond*, with the inscriptions of their author; read some pencil notes written on the margin of books in Charlotte Brontë's well-known microscopic hand; and gazed upon her portrait, by Richmond, and that of the Duke of Wellington and of Thackeray—the one the hero of her early years, the other of her later days. As I recall the barren garden and the grey bleak house, so uninteresting and unpicturesque, and the way in which the associations of the past came over me, and imagination tenanted the empty rooms with the vanished forms of the gifted children of the home, I think of that singular geological formation—a Drusic cavity, with its external form so rough and ordinary-looking, and with its hollow sphere within lined with exquisite crystals—"amethysts purple with the dawn that never was on land or sea."

I need not tell you how many of our cousins from across the ocean have made a pilgrimage to Haworth Parsonage as to a sacred shrine. They admire the works of Charlotte Brontë as much, and perhaps even more, than we. As we rejoice to-day in the closer alliance between

England and the United States, and remember that few influences link nations together more firmly than a common literature, we will not forget that Charlotte Brontë has had her part in cementing this happy union.

After dinner, Mr. Nicholls took me his wife's favourite walk on the moors. I drank in the scenes which fed and nourished the genius of one—to quote the lines of Wordsworth—whose

> Daily teaching had been clouds and hills,
> The silence that is in the starry sky,
> The sleep that is among the lonely hills,

of one

> Whose soul was like a star and dwelt apart.

My companion was kindness itself, but not a spark of enthusiasm could I evoke. I thought at the time that Charlotte Brontë had been drawn to her husband as a hop pillow attracts to itself the weary head and restless brain, but I found afterwards that I had formed a hasty and mistaken judgment. We are all indebted to Mr. Clement Shorter for the noble tribute which he has paid to the character of Mr. Arthur Nicholls.

As I returned with my father to Keighley, he told me how distressed he had been to see the tears in the eyes of old Mr. Brontë while he spoke of the aspersions on his domestic character, and the exaggerated statements with reference to the eccentricities of his daily life, in Mrs. Gaskell's memoir of his daughter, which had just been published. The author of Charlotte Brontë's Life was a kindred genius with her whose portrait she has drawn with all the charm of literary skill. I have no need in this assembly to refer to the grave faults in the early editions of this work, which have disappeared from the later ones. If I venture to hint that a certain exaggeration still remains, some devoted admirer of Mrs. Gaskell in this audience may think of the aphorism – "The defects of the great are the consolation of the dunces."

In order to economise the moments which remain, I will gather my remarks round three central points:—

First.—Some critics of Charlotte Brontë have said that her works are often "broad" and "coarse," and that her love scenes are "unconventional." I need not quote Miss Martineau nor even Mrs. Gaskell. To a certain extent the charge is true. In her isolated life she was singularly ignorant of the world, and with intense realism depicted the people whom she knew and represented the

life which she saw. But absolute purity is compatible with the knowledge of evil. To speak of her as "unsexed," "irreligious," "godless"—epithets applied to her by the religious press of the day—is entirely to misunderstand the relationship between the exercise of the imaginative faculty and the feeling of the heart. When a genius limns a portrait she is not herself but another. Like a Röntgen ray, she penetrates the inmost heart, tenants it for the time, and thinks and speaks through the brain and lips of the character which she pourtrays. Hogarth painted vice, but he was not therefore vicious. Milton depicted the impiety of Satan, but he was not therefore impious. Was Shakespeare a consummate villain, because he gave such a perfect delineation of Iago? If ever there was a pure-minded, true, refined gentlewoman, it was Charlotte Brontë. Through her short "tract of years" she wore "the white flower of a blameless life." On one occasion, Miss Martineau tells us, the question of authoresses overstepping the line which men felt to be proper in works of fiction was discussed in the presence of Charlotte Brontë. She says, "Sir James and Lady Kay-Shuttleworth and I expressed our belief that such violations of propriety were altogether unconscious on the part of those to whom reference had been made. I remember her grave earnest way of saying, 'I trust God will take from me whatever power of invention or expression I may have, before He lets me become blind to the sense of what is fitting or unfitting to be said.'"

Secondly.—The same charge has been brought against Charlotte Brontë as was brought against Shakespeare by writers of the last century, *viz.*—that she wrote to no moral purpose. Such an accusation is to misinterpret the province of fiction. The earth is clothed by a beneficent Creator with flowers as well as with fruit trees. You will not misunderstand me when I say that the highest type of fiction is rarely written for a moral purpose. For one thing I am devoutly thankful, that Charlotte Brontë as a clergyman's daughter never wrote what I may call a theological novel—one of the literary abominations of the present age, where writers, for the most part theologians in petticoats, give us on the one page the gossip and scandal of the afternoon tea-table, and in the other attempt to solve the great spiritual problems which at times stir and agitate the deepest feelings of the human heart. Such productions are as repulsive to me as a parish concert which I once

attended, where I heard comic songs interspersed with selections from the "Messiah." Works such as these are to me "irreligious," and not the pages of Charlotte Brontë. Of the most popular writers of this school I say, "Thou hast nothing to draw with and the well is deep." It is enough for me that Charlotte Brontë by the spell of her genius takes us as by a whirlwind and chariot of fire, if not like the great prophet of Gilead, nearer to heaven, yet out of our present surroundings into a new world, from which we speedily return invigorated and refreshed and fitter for the ordinary and oft-times stern duties of daily life. Such a writer unconsciously fulfils a great moral purpose, and is a benefactor of the human race.

Thirdly.—Yorkshiremen owe a special debt of gratitude to Charlotte Brontë. She has depicted the rugged northern character of a powerful Yorkshire type with photographic reality. Such types—I speak of their external manifestation—are almost already things of the past. As the costumes peculiar to the Cantons of Switzerland are vanishing before railways and tourists and as the elementary schools of the West Riding are banishing those old English words which are so quaint and so rich and which linger on the ear, so dear to the student of Wycliffe's version of the Bible—so the Yorkshire type in its individuality is rapidly disappearing before the advancing tide of a higher mental culture. Our remotest hamlets are brought near to the centres of population, and men and women are becoming like the stones on the beach, which are all moulded and shaped alike, by contact with their fellows under the surging action of the sea. As years roll on, the writings of Currer Bell will have not only a fascinating interest but a distinctly historic value.

I am conscious how far this paper comes short of my own conceptions of the life and work of Charlotte Brontë, but in some compartment of the brain—I know not which—there is a picture gallery of those who have left their impress on my mind. Upon one portrait I sometimes look, idealized it may be by imagination; consecrated, it is true, by the associations of the past and by the touch of death. As I gaze, I know that I look upon the face of one whose memory will never die. The vast majority of the popular writers of the present age have their little day: the night speedily falls, and their work is buried in oblivion, but I venture to assert that Charlotte Brontë will occupy a niche in the Temple of Literary Fame so long as the English tongue is spoken and the English race endures.

THE POEMS OF THE BRONTË SISTERS.

A Paper read at Huddersfield, before the Brontë Society, on January 14th, 1899.

By the Rev. Dr. Bruce.

As a new-born convert to the Brontë cult, and one of the least of the Scholars in this modern school of heroine-worship, I present these simple crude imaginings more as a humble learner and anxious inquirer ready to be instructed and corrected by the head teachers than in any sense claiming to be an expert.

I am deeply interested in and amazed at the vast array of Brontë Bibliography brought to light, and in due order set forth by this valuable Association, and surprised that so little has been written concerning the Poems. They have not had either the attention or the glory they deserve, by reason of the greater glory of the Novels.

Yet the Poems were the first of the numerous and varied products of their busy pen to appear in print. And I fear that if they had stood alone, without the greater merit and renown of subsequent tales and the excitement occasioned by Mrs. Gaskell's famous biography, they would probably have remained in comparative oblivion; simply because there is nothing startling or sensational in the title, subject, or style of the verses to attract the attention of readers, specially as they were ushered into the world under such indefinite and unattractive names as Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell, leaving the sex and habitation of the authors unknown.

The little volume of 61 pieces, in 150 pages, 16mo., was published by Aylott & Jones, Paternoster Row, at the sole risk and expense of the shy and retiring but gifted and ambitious sisters, who staked 30 guineas from their limited income, with the fond hope that—though they had written more from the pure love of giving fixed form and chaste expression to the strange and weird thoughts about nature and human life which stirred their active minds in their lonely moorland home, than for fame—the work had something of beauty and merit in it, which would sooner or later find appreciative readers. The publication was undertaken mainly on the advice of Charlotte, who was surprised and delighted to find that her sister Emily had written verses so terse, vigorous, and imaginative. She

frankly and humbly confessed "all of the little volume that merits to be known is Emily's."

It fell flat and dead at its birth. Nobody enquired for it, far less bought it. Very interesting and pitiful is the letter Charlotte wrote to De Quincey (March 16th, 1849, just a year after its publication)—

> "Our book is found to be a drug: no man needs it, or heeds it. In the space of a year our publisher has disposed but of two copies, and by what painful efforts he succeeded in getting rid of these two, himself only knows. Before transferring the edition to the trunkmakers, we are distributing a few copies to literary friends, and we beg to offer you one, in acknowledgment of the pleasure and profit we have often derived from your works."

It must have been painful for those sensitive, modest young ladies to importune friendly critics for a kind recognition of their handiwork. The *Athenæum* and *Dublin University Magazine* were among the first, if not the only, periodicals to give spontaneous words of discriminate praise.

Charlotte's estimate of the relative merits of the work of the three sisters has been generally accepted. In Ward's *English Poets* and Miles' *Poets of the Century* Emily's name alone has a separate heading, with only the briefest casual reference to Charlotte and Anne as minor poets. Miss Robinson has followed their lead to the *bitter end*, with supercilious scorn and sisterly severity. She bestows but faint praise on Charlotte, condemning the youngest sister in such ungracious comment as this:—

> "Only a partial judge could find anything much to praise in gentle Anne's *trivial* verses. Had the book an index of first lines what a scathing criticism on the contents would it be!
>
> 'Sweet are thy strains, celestial bard!' *(To Cowper.)*
>
> 'I'll rest me in this sheltered bower!'
>
> 'Oh, I am very weary, though tears no longer flow.'
>
> From such beginnings we too clearly foresee the *hopeless bathos* of the end! Poor child, her real deep sorrows, expressed in such worn-out, ill-fitting phrases, are as little touching as the beauty of a London shop-girl under the ready-made, cast-off adornments of her second-hand fancy."

Surely these very hyphened epithets of dispraise should not have been flung at the head of a gentle, cultured, delicate, and over-worked girl—even if her mind was not so gifted with the poetic faculty as her heart surely was graced with sincerest piety. Lockhart's opinion was that the poems of Currer Bell were much better than those of Acton and Ellis.

After the too-early death of the younger sisters, Charlotte published a supplementary volume, consisting of selections from Ellis's and Acton's poems. Her most touching and beautiful preface to these selections—a perfect gem of critical art—together with the intrinsic worth of some of the supplementary poems, have considerably added to the lustre of the writers' fame, giving each of the three a niche in the temple of fame and decided pre-eminence to Emily, of whom Mr. Gosse has since informed us, "not even the unstinted praise of three great and very dissimilar poets had given to her due rank in popular esteem."

Why are not these poems better known, more popular? Seldom, if ever, does a preacher or speaker quote, in pulpit or on platform, a single line or verse of Brontë poetry to point a moral or adorn and enliven his discourse. Why are they so seldom, if ever, used in our Day Schools for recitations or reading lessons? How is it you never pick up any fragments of these precious jewels on drawing-room tables, from the dainty pages of ladies' albums and birthday books? Partly, because the Brontë verses are so narrow in their range, so subjective, introspective, vague, and ineffective. They are not catching. Pass the magnet of your mind and memory over them, and it is surprising how few happy figures or select sentences cling tenaciously and ineffaceably as the result. There are few alliterations, few epigrams, few lines of unique artistic beauty. One solitary line in *Faith and Despondency* is held up by Miss Robinson as a conspicuous instance of the genuine afflatus—

"The dim moon struggling in the sky."

There is no ballad or poem in the vernacular Yorkshire throughout the series. The language is pure English, but the sentiments often too refined and ethereal or too sad and pessimistic. They are scarcely ever introduced into Brontë biography to illustrate the text, or throw a sidelight on certain incidents of their brave struggle against adverse circumstances and painful environment; whilst the sisters themselves never interwove them with their novels, after the manner of Geo. McDonald and other modern novelists. They are too exclusively the confession of the secret struggles and sufferings of their own hearts, alternating between faith and despair, or the description of bleak moorland scenery, which to them was altogether lovely, but to dwellers in Mesopotamia, or the Lake District, and

other more habitable parts of the earth their eulogy seems extravagant and overdone.

I would venture to suggest that there should be a new and complete edition of the poems, with notes and explanatory references, which would be a great help to the understanding of allusions and lend increased interest to the reading of them. They are pictures which would look better if put in appropriate frames.

Another suggestion may be worth some consideration. Few of the Brontë's verses are set to *music*. Possibly they do not lend themselves so readily to such use; there may not be many chords in them to strike the lyre or captivate the ear of the musician. Yet there are several pieces which if wedded to fit and pretty music, as in the case of Miss Proctor's "Lost Chord," Burns' "Banks and Braes," or Tennyson's "Brook," would become familiar household words. In addition to the many things attempted and done by the Brontë Society, could not some inspired apostle or singing evangelist of this new cult, some Choragus or librettists lead captive several of the stanzas and lyrics of the Brontë sisters to enrich the treasures of English minstrelsy? Sure I am that they would make better songs than many of the insipid—not to say silly and nonsensical—ditties which are sometimes sung in theatres and concerts, and which in more senses than one "bring down the house" where they are sung.

Among those already set to music is Charlotte's ballad, "The Parting":—

"There's no use in weeping,
Tho' we are condemned to part:
There's such a thing as keeping
A remembrance in one's heart."

Another song, entitled "Love and Friendship," attributed to Charlotte, must be surely a mistake; at any rate, Emily's:—

"Love is like the wild rose-briar:
Friendship like the holly-tree," &c.

There is also a song of Emily's much praised by Messrs. Garnett and Birrell:—

"The linnet in the rocky dells,
The moor-lark in the air,
The bee among the heather-bells
That hide my lady fair.

The wild deer browse above her breast,
The wild birds raise their brood;
And they her smiles of love caressed
Have left her solitude."

The "Bluebell," by Emily, would make a sweet song:—

"The bluebell is the sweetest flower
That waves in summer air;
Its blossoms have the mightiest power
To soothe my spirit's care.

There is a spell in purple heath
Too wildly, sadly dear;
The violet has a fragrant breath,
But fragrance will not cheer."

or, the "Day Dream," by Emily:—

"On a sunny brae alone I lay
One summer afternoon;
It was the marriage-time of May
With her young lover, June."

or, "Stanzas," by Currer Bell:—

"If thou be in a lonely place,
If one hour's calm be thine,
As evening bends her placid face
O'er this sweet day's decline;
If all the earth and all the heaven
Now look serene on thee,
As o'er them shuts the summer even
One moment—think of me."

And at this point—remembering that Divine worship has a claim upon and charm for humanity as well as secular art and literature—I am pleased to notice that at least four of Anne Bronte's poems are included in modern hymnology and occasionally sung in the Free Churches of Britain and America. Indeed, my first acquaintance with Brontë poetry was from the fact of our having in our Congregational Hymnal a hymn of Anne's, which has appeared in Dr. Hunter's Glasgow Hymnal and others.

"Oppressed with sin and woe,
A burdened heart I bear,
Oppressed by many a mighty foe,
Yet will I not despair.

With this polluted heart
I dare to come to Thee,
Holy and mighty as Thou art,
For Thou wilt pardon me.

I feel that I am weak
And prone to every sin,
But Thou who giv'st to those who seek
Wilt give me strength within.

I need not fear my foes,
  I need not yield to care,
I need not sink beneath my woes,
  For Thou wilt answer prayer.

In my Redeemer's name
  I give myself to Thee;
And, all unworthy as I am,
  My God will welcome me."

It probably may not be the best of poetry, but it expresses a most real experience in Christian life, and has been helpful to the faith and joy of not a few genuine penitents.

Another hymn, "My God, O let me call Thee mine," is included in the Baptist Hymnal, and in some books is assigned to the period of Lent. Indeed, most of her verses are of that plaintive and penitential character which is more fitted for seasons of fasting and humiliation and private devotion than for the jubilant praises of ordinary worshippers.

To the same plaintive class belongs the last memento of that delicate, refined girl—that much-tried, but meek, submissive child of God—which is also to be found in some hymnals.

"I hoped that with the brave and strong,
  My portioned task might lie;
To toil amid the busy throng,
  With purpose pure and high.
But God has fixed another part,
  And He has fixed it well,
I said so with my bleeding heart,
  When first the anguish fell."

. . . .

Concluding, as with her dying breath, the sweet song of humble faith and self-sacrifice:—

"Should death be standing at the gate,
  Thus should I keep my vow,
But Lord: whatever be my fate,
  Oh, let me serve Thee now."

There is more merit and higher poesy in that extract from "The Three Guides," which Dr. James Martineau and Dr. Hunter have made into a hymn.

"Spirit of Faith, be Thou my Guide,
  O clasp my hand in Thine,
And let me never leave Thy side;
  Thy comforts are divine.

Earth calls Thee blind, misguided one,
  But who can show like Thee
Forgotten things that have been done,
  And things that are to be?

Gentle Thine eye and soft Thy voice,
But wondrous is Thy might
To make the wretched soul rejoice.
To give the simple light.

And still to all that seek Thy way,
This wondrous power is given,
E'en while their footsteps press the clay,
Their souls ascend to heaven.

Thro' pain and death I can rejoice,
If but Thy strength be mine;
Earth has no music like Thy voice,
Life owns no joy like Thine.

Spirit of Faith! I'll go with Thee,
Thou if I hold Thee fast,
Wilt guide, defend, and strengthen me,
And bear me home at last."

Some of you may lightly esteem the *hymn* as awakening emotions rather than new thought; as too often weak and effeminate in sentiment, and poor as a work of art. But what an important part in the history and life of the Christian Church hymns have played! not only in preserving doctrine, teaching duty, inspiring as well as expressing faith and hope, but in lofty and pure aspiration, lifting the soul to the holiest and heavenliest.

It may not be out of place to mention here that though Anne was a much more pronounced Christian of the orthodox and evangelical type—as represented by Venn of Huddersfield and Grimshaw of Haworth—than her sisters, specially Emily, who was agnostic and pantheistic in some of her utterances, she was no rigid Calvinist; and in a spirit more reverent and charitable than Burns' address to the "Unco Guid" she addresses "A Word to the Elect," and advocates the larger hope as boldly and more fully and passionately than Tennyson or Geo. McDonald.

"And, oh! there lives within my heart
A hope long nursed by me
(And should its cheering ray depart
How dark my soul would be).

That as in Adam all have died,
In Christ shall all men live;
And ever round His throne abide
Eternal praise to give.

That even the wicked shall at last
Be fitted for the skies,
And when their dreadful doom is past
To life and light arise.

I ask not how remote the day,
Nor what the sinners' woe
Before their dross is purged away;
Enough for me to know—
That when the cup of wrath is drained,
The metal purified,
They'll cling to what they once disdained,
And live by Him that died."

I have left little or no time for any separate treatment of the poetical merits of the three sisters, or for quoting extracts in illustration and support of my opinion. They are very diverse, more in matter and faith than in form and versification, for they all adopt largely the simple metres of psalms and hymns. Seeing the two younger sisters died so young, and without the stimulating and inspiring effect of the celebrity and applause which the Brontë works of fiction achieved would no doubt have exerted on the shy and shrinking occupants of Haworth Parsonage, we cannot but admire their poetical fragments as samples and promise of something better and higher, if death had not cut short their days in early womanhood.

Charlotte's poems are longer than those of Emily and Anne, which are frequently in C.M. and L.M. as hymns. She has been accused of dragging in a moral at the end of a lyric. She is more dramatic than Emily and nearly as imaginative, and not so pessimistic or sarcastic.

"Pilate's Wife's Dream," the longest of her pieces, is an undeveloped tragedy. The Governor's wife is represented as expressing in passionate and burning tones her scornful hate of her wicked husband, who, according to her, had no redeeming feature in his repulsive character.

"Forced to sit by his side and see his deeds,
Forced to behold that visage, hour by hour,
In whose gaunt lines the abhorrent gazer reads
A triple lust of gold, and blood, and power;
A soul whom motives fierce, yet abject, urge;
Rome's senile slave, and Judah's tyrant scourge."

How graphically in "Frances" she pourtrays the misery of a tearful woman bearing the yoke of absolute despair:—

"Unloved—I love: unwept—I weep;
Grief I restrain: hope I repress;
Vain is this anguish—fixed and deep,
Vainer, desires and dreams of bliss.
My love awakens no love again,
My tears collect, and fall unfelt;
My sorrow touches none with pain,
My humble hopes to nothing melt."

But she knew how to cast foreboding fears away, and put on the courage and dauntless resolution which was the characteristic of all the family. In that brief poem, "Life," she says :—

"What though Death at times steps in,
And calls our best away?
What though sorrow seems to win
O'er hope a heavy sway?
Yet Hope again elastic springs,
Unconquered, though she fell,
Still buoyant are her golden wings,
Still strong to bear us well.

Manfully, fearlessly,
The day of trial bear;
For gloriously, victoriously,
Can Courage quell despair."

But, after all, Emily is the bright particular star in that three-fold constellation of Yorkshire poetesses. She is the laureate of the moors—wild, passionate, fearless, and, for a time at least though not to the last, sceptical and agnostic.

These six of her poems are commonly recognised as specimens of her genius most worthy: "The Night Wind," "The Death Scene," "Remembrance," Stanzas commencing "Often Rebuked," "The Old Stoic," "The Last Lines." To which may be added: "The Linnet in the Rocky Dell," "The Prisoner," eulogised by Swinburne; "The Lady to her Guitar"; that most pathetic piece: "The Outcast Mother."

Though the sisters were so different in character, they had great respect and affection for one another, and dearly loved the old home, in spite of its dreary surroundings and the painful scenes it sometimes witnessed. Emily specially loved her home, and hated school life, whether in England or in Brussels. She idealises her own experiences and feelings of love for home in the first of the posthumous poems.

"A little while, a little while
The weary task is put away,
And I can sing, and I can smile
Alike while I have holiday.

Where wilt thou go, my harassed heart,
What thought, what scene invites thee now,
What spot or near or far apart
Has rest for thee, my weary brow?

There is a spot 'mid barren hills,
Where winter howls and driving rain;
But if the dreary tempest chills,
There is a light that warms again.

The house is old, the trees are bare,
Moonless above bends twilight's dome,
But what on earth is half so dear,
So longed for—as the hearth of home?"

Charlotte beautifully said :—

> "My sister Emily loved the moors. Flowers brighter than the rose bloomed in the blackest of the heath for her; out of a sullen hollow in a livid hill-side her mind could make an Eden. She found in the bleak solitude many dear delights, and not the least and best-loved was *liberty*."

But though she loved liberty, it was not of the ordinary type. She hated the restraints and conventionalities of society, disliked strange faces and places; she cared not to make herself agreeable or amiable to others, could be repulsive and defiant; she had no disposition to bind herself to Church creeds or Church work, or to teach in a Sunday School; and, though a lover of liberty, she was strongly and painfully under the tyranny of her own prejudices and pet aversions. She would have been a happier woman had she sought more communion with God and her fellow man; but she was self-reliant and independent to a fault.

> "Let me be false in other's eyes
> If faithful in my own."—*Honour's Martyr.*

She preferred apostrophising her own fancy and imagination and addressing the howling wind and the cold stars in poetic rhapsodies, to opening her heart in prayer to God or her mind to the love and sympathy of living men and women.

There was often a vehemence of expression and a passionate fearlessness of utterance, which made her appear far worse than she really was.

> "So stood I in Heaven's glorious sun,
> And in the glare of Hell!
> My spirit drank a mingled tone
> Of seraph's song and demon's moan,
> What my soul bore, my soul alone
> Within itself may tell."

Her stoic harshness of manner and purpose comes out in her writings again and again, but if we compare

THE OLD STOIC.

Riches I hold in light esteem,
And Love I laugh to scorn;
And Lust of Fame was but a dream,
That vanished with the morn.

And if I pray, the only prayer
That moves my lips for me
Is "Leave the heart that now I bear,
And give me liberty!"

Yes, as my swift days near their goal,
'Tis all that I implore:
In life and death a changeless soul
With courage to endure.

which is the final piece in the first volume, with the grand and eloquent confession of faith and hope in her last lines of all, you will see how her too unyielding self-reliance broke down at last, and, though determined to die standing on her weary feet, there was submission as well as strength of will in her departing spirit as it yielded itself into the Everlasting Arms.

LAST LINES OF EMILY BRONTË.

No coward soul is mine,
No trembler in the world's storm-troubled sphere;
I see Heaven's glories shine,
And faith shines equal, arming me from fear.

O God, within my breast,
Almighty, ever-present Deity,
Life—that in me has rest
As I, undying Life—have power in Thee.

Vain are the thousand creeds
That move men's hearts: unutterably vain,
Worthless as withered weeds,
Or, idlest froth amid the boundless main.

To waken doubt in one
Holding so fast by Thine Infinity;
So surely anchored on
The stedfast rock of immortality.

With wide-embracing love
Thy Spirit animates eternal years,
Pervades and broods above,
Changes, sustains, dissolves, creates, and rears.

Tho' earth and man were gone,
And suns and universes ceased to be,
And THOU wert left alone,
Every existence would exist in THEE.

There is not room for death,
Nor atom that His might could render void,
THOU, THOU, art Being and Breath,
And what THOU art may never be destroyed.

She was just the kind of woman whom Ian Maclaren would delight to honour and beatify, discovering, as he no doubt would, with his eye of love and heart of charity, hidden virtues and graces, a genuine gentleness beneath her seeming severity, and a secret faith in God beneath the ruins of her sorely tried, but overthrown, agnosticism.

BRONTË SOCIETY PUBLICATION.

SWAN ELECTRIC ENGRAVING CO.

CHARLOTTE BRONTE'S GRAVE,
HAWORTH CHURCH.

BRONTË SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS.

PART X.

CONTAINING THE FOLLOWING

REPRINTS:

1. Reminiscences of Charlotte Brontë, by Miss Ellen Nussey.
2. The Last Sketch, by W. M. Thackeray.
3. Emma: a fragment, by Charlotte Brontë.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

JOHN WAUGH.

PRINTED FOR THE SOCIETY BY
M. FIELD AND SONS, GODWIN STREET, BRADFORD.

AUGUST, 1899.

PREFACE.

THE Brontë Society is fortunate in including amongst its members a number of gentlemen whose interest in the work of the Society is such as to prompt them to make some sacrifice for its welfare. In 1895, Mr. Claude Meeker, then American Consul at Bradford, presented each member with a copy of his "Haworth: Home of the Brontës" (unfortunately now out of print); and in the following year "A Descriptive Catalogue of the Objects in the Brontë Museum," by the late Treasurer, Mr. F. C. Galloway, was presented to the members by Mrs. Galloway. Only last year Mr. W. E. B. Priestley, a member of the Council, gave to each of the members a copy of Mr. Wm. Scruton's "Thornton and the Brontës," and now Mr. John Waugh, one of our esteemed Vice-Presidents, has generously defrayed the cost of the present number, the contents of which he has long had a desire to bring together for the benefit of the Society. Mr. Waugh has not only been successful in obtaining permission from the owners of the copyrights to reprint the following articles, but he has also secured the use of the blocks which illustrated the Reminiscences by Miss Nussey.

The Council takes this opportunity of thanking Mr. Waugh for the service he has rendered to the Society; the Century Publishing Company for permission to reprint Miss Nussey's Reminiscences and the blocks which accompanied the article; Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co., for permission to reprint the "Last Sketch," by W. M. Thackeray, and "Emma," by Charlotte Brontë; and lastly Mrs. Ritchie, the daughter of Thackeray, for her sympathetic assistance in connection with some of the copyrights.

B.W.

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112. Gloucester Terrace
Hyde Park.
1857

My dear Mrs. Gaskell

If all be well I shall leave London at the close of next week – Friday or Saturday – how will this arrangement accord with my coming to see you for a day or two on my way home? I remember in your last you mentioned the possibility of your keeping Marianne down from school when the holidays begin – in that case a visit just now would be out of

the question — to your Decision there
I submit the matter — relying now as
ever on your perfect candour.

London has been almost as quiet for
me as Haworth — I have paid but one
single visit to some old friends. Thackeray's
lectures and Rachel's acting are the
two things in this great Babylon which
have stirred one's interest me most —
simply because in them I found most
of what was genuine whether for good
or evil; two Sermons also I have liked —
one preached by D'Aubigny — the other by
Melville. The Exhibition is no doubt a
great — fine sight but not much in
my way.

I have not called on Lady K. S. and
indeed don't see why I should. Cui bono?

Calling on people who can't possibly
want you seems to me a grievous
waste of ~~that~~ exertion — besides — in my
estimation — partaking of the error of ob-
trusiveness.

Our often recurring nervous headache has
much annoyed & depressed me during my
stay in Town — it curtails this note.
Write me a line soon to say how you
are and what I must do — Remember
me kindly to Mrs Gaskell, & believe me

Sincerely yours C Brontë

Mrs Gaskell

Plymouth Grove.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE,

By John Waugh.

In the present number of "Transactions and Publications" two interesting articles are reproduced through the kindness of the respective owners of the copyrights, duly acknowledged elsewhere. A facsimile of one of Charlotte Brontë's letters written to Mrs. Gaskell from London during her visit in 1851 is given, and a view of her Grave in Haworth Church forms the Frontispiece.

Of the articles, the first, "Reminiscences of Charlotte Brontë," is from the pen of Miss Nussey, contributed to the pages of *Scribner's Monthly*, at the urgent request of the Editor of that Magazine. The article appeared in Vol. 2, 1871, pp. 18 to 31.

Miss Nussey was Charlotte Brontë's oldest and dearest friend, and as such her opportunities were exceptional—the correspondence between the two has been a mine of wealth to the biographers of the Brontës. There were the visits of Charlotte to Ellen, and above all of Ellen to Haworth. It is to these latter we owe perhaps the chief charm of the pages, as from them we gather knowledge of the surroundings of the life at Haworth. Did that life beget or only help to mould the genius of the sisters? Of one thing we are certain, as we take in the whole of the circumstances of Charlotte's life, that the one word "fortitude" to quote Dr. W. Robertson Nicoll, "and no other than that puts the case so well." Miss Nussey's paper helps those who hold dear the memory of Charlotte to a proper estimate of "a life, the lesson of whose suffering and heroism is one of the best legacies Heaven has granted to this generation." The article is reproduced with all the illustrations which appeared in the original, and will no doubt be welcome to all Brontë lovers.

The second article entitled the "Last Sketch" is an Introduction by Thackeray to a fragment of a story by the late Charlotte Brontë, entitled "Emma," which appeared in the *Cornhill Magazine*, Vol. 1, pp. 485—489. A story unfinished, indeed it contains the very last pages which were traced by the hand of Charlotte Brontë," and as such, possesses a mournful interest.

The introduction, which is in the manner of the Master in his best mood, is a veritable "In Memoriam." Swinburne, speaking of this tribute to her memory, says:

"They seem to me worthy of special remembrance among the truest and noblest, the manliest and the kindliest lines that ever came from the pen of Thackeray."

The admiration of Charlotte Brontë for Thackeray, and Thackeray's high appreciation of the author of *Jane Eyre* is a great literary fact. They were respectively the authors of two books almost contemporaneous as to dates of publication, and perhaps the two most remarkable literary productions of the reign of Victoria. In this number of our publications, Thackeray and Charlotte Brontë are associated together in a manner befitting the memory of both.

Thackeray read *Jane Eyre* whilst he was being pressed for copy for the November or December part of *Vanity Fair*. Of *Jane Eyre* he wrote "I could not, having taken the volumes up, lay them down until they were read through."

Through the kindness of Mr. Williams, Charlotte Brontë received the monthly parts of *Vanity Fair* as they were issued. Whilst Thackeray was reading *Jane Eyre* in October, 1847, by an author whose name and sex were alike unknown to him, Charlotte Brontë was at the same time reading *Vanity Fair* of the same month in the yellow covers.

Thackeray came to the conclusion that *Jane Eyre* was "the master work of a great genius," and evidently he manifested a natural curiosity to know something of the author. "Should Mr. Thackeray again ask after Currer Bell, say the secret is and will be kept because it is not worth disclosure." There was, at any rate, mind contact through the medium of their respective productions.

"I have read the 'Caxtons,' I have looked at 'Fanny Hervey,'—take a hundred, take a thousand of such works and weigh them in the balance with a page of Thackeray," so wrote Charlotte to Mr. Williams.

In the Dedication of the Second Edition of *Jane Eyre* to Thackeray, we obtain in a condensed form the opinion of the author of that work on the author of *Vanity Fair*, the conclusion of which is as follows:—

"Why have I alluded to this man? I have alluded to him, reader, because I think I see in him an intellect profounder and more unique than his contemporaries have yet recognised; because I regard him as the first social regenerator of the day—as the very master of that working corps who would restore to rectitude the warped system of things; because I think no commentator on his writings

has yet found the comparison that suits him, the terms which rightly characterise his talent. They say he is like Fielding; they talk of his wit, humour, comic power. He resembles Fielding as an eagle does a vulture. Fielding could stoop on carrion, but Thackeray never does. His wit is bright, his humour attractive, but both bear the same relation to his serious genius that the mere lambent sheet-lightning playing under the edge of the summer cloud, does to the electric death-spark hid in its womb. Finally; I have alluded to Mr. Thackeray, because to him—if he will accept the tribute of a total stranger—I have dedicated this second edition of *Jane Eyre*."—The date of such dedication is December 21st, 1847.

In July, 1848, there came to the Haworth Parsonage a cloth copy of *Vanity Fair*, with the grateful regards of W. M. Thackeray.

A Reviewer (Quarterly Review, Vol. 84, No. 167, 1849) bracketed the two books, *Vanity Fair* and *Jane Eyre* under one article. "The author of *Jane Eyre* is Mr. Thackeray's governess, whom he had himself chosen as his model of Becky, who in mingled love and revenge personified him in return as Mr. Rochester." Romantic rumours may have been current in Mayfair, but did ever Reviewer, before or since, give credence to such wide of the mark stories from any other motive than that of malice?

During Charlotte's visit to London in 1849, the author of *Jane Eyre* saw the author of *Vanity Fair*, through the good offices of Mr. George Smith, of Messrs. Smith Elder and Co.

During the Exhibition year in 1851 they met again, and Charlotte attended one of Thackeray's lectures. See facsimile of autograph letter to Mrs. Gaskell for Charlotte Brontë's opinion of Thackeray's lectures and Rachel's acting—"the two things in this great Babylon which have stirred and interested me most."

The frontispiece, Charlotte Brontë's grave, is a proper though mournful accompaniment to the "Last Sketch." The position of the grave is indicated by the white card.

REMINISCENCES OF CHARLOTTE BRONTË,

By Miss Ellen Nussey.

Reprinted by permission from "Scribner's Monthly," May, 1871, now the "Century Magazine."

To the Editor: You with much urgency beg me to give you some reminiscences of the Brontë family.

The life of Charlotte Brontë, viewed apart from her high gifts and genius as an authoress, was a very unsensational life; for the most part it was a life of domestic duty, self-sacrifice, fidelity to whatever she believed to be right, fortitude in suffering, and patient resignation under all inevitable trials; and these are not elements of attraction to readers who care for excitement. What is said of Charlotte may, with almost equal truth, be said of Emily and Anne; though they differed greatly in many points of character and disposition, they were each and all on common ground if a *principle* had to be maintained or a *sham* to be detected. They were all jealous of anything hollow or unreal. All were resolutely single-minded, eminently courageous, eminently simple in their habits, and eminently tender-hearted.

For many years past I have from time to time received urgent requests from your countrymen (who have at all times evinced the highest appreciation of Charlotte Brontë's writings) for a further publication of her letters.

In 1867 some communication arose on the subject with your now lamented countryman, Henry J. Raymond. He wrote to intimate he should possibly see me on this subject in England, while on his way to join some members of his family in Europe. He advised a further publication of C.B.'s letters, said "they would in any case be a considerable success," and begged to assure me that "he should be glad to aid in the enterprise as far as it might be in his power." I had entertained strong doubts as to the desirability of adding (at least for some time to come) to the letters already given in the Memoir (which were many more than were at first anticipated), when close upon Mr. Raymond's advice another kind of urgency rose up, which has often been very active among some of C B.'s warmest admirers.

With painful frequency it has been said to me, "Why do you not defend your friend's memory from the oft-made charge of irreligion?" Every chord of affection vibrated in response to such an appeal, soothed however, for the time, by the promise to one's self that, on some future day, her own letters should be her defence, *after* (as I thought) my own web of life had run its course. But a series of

events (which I need not specify) seemed to call, and to call so repeatedly, I could no longer refuse or delay to set about giving, as a tribute of justice to herself, a few more of her own words, the words of her *heart* and *feelings*, as they were elicited by the common accidents and incidents of daily life. The doing of this involves some sacrifice; but to shrink from possible annoyance or discomfort when duly called upon in defence of one we have loved, is indeed to be cowardly and craven-hearted, and unworthy of Charlotte Brontë's faithful love and friendship.

It is hoped the few more letters now given* will not fail to show with deep truth that her religion, though it did not manifest itself in phraseology and shibboleth, yet existed in a higher and better sense, finding its expression in the thought and action which springs from trustful obedient faith. Why should she be condemned on points of doctrine upon which she had no call to pronounce? Why question her faith in our Saviour when her whole life was a practical illustration of His teachings,—her constant attendance at celebrations of the Holy Eucharist, a declaration of her faith in His atonement,—her self-sacrifice to duty, offered so freely and entirely without one thought of merit or of praise to be won, and this, too, when tempted by a combination of circumstance and affection which none of less religious principle could have resisted;—when she never shirked a duty because it was irksome, or advised another to do what she herself did not fully count the cost of doing,—above all, when her goodness was not of the stand-still order,—when there was new beauty, when there were new developments and growths of goodness to admire and attract in every succeeding renewal of intercourse,—when daily she was a Christian heroine, who bore her cross with the firmness of a martyr-saint.

E.

SCHOOL DAYS AT ROE HEAD.

ARRIVING at school about a week after the general assembling of the pupils, I was not expected to accompany them when the time came for their daily exercise, but while they were out, I was led into the school-room, and quietly left to make my observations. I had come to the conclusion it was very nice and comfortable for a school-room, though I had little knowledge of school-rooms in general, when, turning to the window to observe the look-out I became aware for the first time that I was not alone; there

* The letters referred to appeared in the last volume of *Hours at Home*, although many of great interest still remain unpublished.—ED.

was a silent, weeping, dark little figure in the large bay-window; she must, I thought, have risen from the floor. As soon as I had recovered from my surprise, I went from the far end of the room, where the book-shelves were, the contents of which I must have contemplated with a little awe in anticipation of coming studies. A crimson cloth covered the long table down the center of the room, which helped, no doubt to hide the shrinking little figure from my view. I was touched and troubled at once to see her so sad and so tearful.

I said *shrinking*, because her attitude, when I saw her, was that of one who wished to hide both herself and her grief. She did not shrink, however, when spoken to, but in very few words confessed she was "home-sick." After a little of such comfort as could be offered, it was suggested to her that there was a possibility of her too having to comfort the speaker by and by for the same cause. A faint quivering smile then lighted her face; the tear-drops fell; we silently took each other's hands, and at once we felt that genuine sympathy which always consoles, even though it be unexpressed. We did not talk or stir till we heard the approaching footsteps of other pupils coming in from their play; it had been a game called "French and English," which was always very vigorously played, but in which Charlotte Brontë never could be induced to join. Perhaps the merry voices contesting for victory, which reached our ears in the school-room, jarred upon her then sensitive misery, and caused her ever after to dislike the game; but she was physically unequal to that exercise of muscle which was keen enjoyment to strong, healthy girls, both older and younger than herself. Miss Wooler's system of education required that a good deal of her pupils' work should be done in classes, and to effect this, new pupils had generally a season of solitary study; but Charlotte's fervent aplication made this period a very short one to her, —she was quickly up to the needful standard, and ready for the daily routine and arrangement of studies, and as qñickly did she outstrip her companions, rising from the bottom of the classes to the top, a position which, when she had once gained, she never had to regain. She was first in everything but play, yet never was a word heard of envy or jealousy from her companions; every one felt she had won her laurels by an amount of diligence and hard labor of which they were incapable. She never exulted in her successes or seemed conscious of them; her mind was so wholly set on attaining knowledge that she apparently forgot all else.

THE ROE HEAD SCHOOL.

Charlotte's appearance did not strike me at first as it did others. I saw her grief, not herself particularly, till afterwards. She never seemed to me the unattractive little person others designated her, but certainly she was at this time anything but *pretty;* even her good points were lost. Her naturally beautiful hair of soft silky brown being then dry and frizzy-looking, screwed up in tight little curls, showing features that were all the plainer from her exceeding thinness and want of complexion, she looked "dried in." A dark, rusty green stuff dress of old-fashioned make detracted still more from her appearance; but let her wear what she might, or do what she would, she had ever the demeanour of a born gentlewoman; vulgarity was an element that never won the slightest affinity with her nature. Some of the elder girls, who had been years at school, thought her ignorant. This was true in one sense; ignorant she was indeed in the elementary education which is given in schools, but she far surpassed her most advanced school-fellows in knowledge of what was passing in the world at large and in the literature of her country. She knew a thousand things in these matters unknown to them.

She had taught herself a little French before she came to school; this little knowledge of the language was very useful to her when afterwards she was engaged in translation or dictation. She soon began to make a good figure in French lessons. Music she wished to acquire, for which she had both ear and taste, but her nearsightedness caused her to stoop so dreadfully in order to see her notes, she was dissuaded from persevering in the acquirement, especially as she had at this time an invincible objection to wearing glasses. Her very taper fingers, tipped with the most circular nails, did not seem very suited for instrumental execution; but when wielding the pen or the pencil, they appeared in the very office they were created for.

Her appetite was of the smallest; for years she had not tasted animal food; she had the greatest dislike to it; she always had something specially provided for her at our midday repast. Towards the close of the first half-year she was induced to take, by little and little, meat gravy with vegetable, and in the second half-year she commenced taking a very small portion of animal food daily. She then grew a little bit plumper, looked younger and more animated, though she was never what is called lively at this period. She always seemed to feel that a deep responsibility rested upon her; that she was an object of

expense to those at home, and that she must use every moment to attain the purpose for which she was sent to school, *i.e.*, to fit herself for governess life. She had almost too much opportunity for her conscientious diligence; we were so little restricted in our doings, the industrious might accomplish the appointed tasks of the day and enjoy a little leisure, but she chose in many things to do *double* lessons when not prevented by class arrangement or a companion. In two of her studies she was associated with her friend, and great was her distress if her companion failed to be ready, when she was, with the lesson of the day. She liked the stated task to be over, that she might be free to pursue her self-appointed ones. Such, however, was her conscientiousness that she never did what some girls think it generous to do; generous and unselfish though she was, she never whispered help to a companion in class (as she might have done), to rid herself of the trouble of having to appear again. All her school-fellows regarded her, I believe, as a model of high rectitude, close application, and great abilities. She did not play or amuse herself when others did. When her companions were merry round the fire, or otherwise enjoying themselves during the twilight, which was always a precious time of relaxation, she would be kneeling close to the window busy with her studies, and this would last so long that she was accused of seeing in the dark; yet though she did not play, as girls style play, she was ever ready to help with suggestions in those plays which required taste or arrangement.

When her companions formed the idea of having a coronation performance on a half-holiday, it was Charlotte Brontë who drew up the programme, arranged the titles to be adopted by her companions for the occasion, wrote the invitations to those who were to grace the ceremony, and selected for each a title, either for sound that pleased the ear or for historical association. The preparations for these extra half-holidays (which were very rare occurrences) sometimes occupied spare moments for weeks before the event. On this occasion Charlotte prepared a very elegant little speech for the one who was selected to present the crown. Miss W.'s younger sister consented after much entreaty to be crowned as our queen (a very noble, stately queen she made), and did her pupils all the honor she could by adapting herself to the rôle of the moment. The following exquisite little speech shows Charlotte's aptitude, even then, at giving fitting expression to her thoughts:—

"Powerful Queen! accept this crown, the symbol of dominion, from the hands of your faithful and affectionate subjects! And if their earnest and united wishes have any efficacy, you will long be permitted to reign over this peaceful, though circumscribed empire.

[Signed, &c., &c.]

"Your loyal subjects."

The little fête finished off with what was called a ball; but for lack of numbers we had to content ourselves with one quadrille and two Scotch reels. Last of all there was a supper, which was considered very *recherché*, most of it having been coaxed out of yielding mammas and elder sisters, in addition to some wise expenditure of pocket money. The grand feature, however, of the supper was the attendance of a mulatto servant. We descended for a moment from our assumed dignities to improvise this distinguishing appanage. The liveliest of our party, "Jessie York," volunteered this office, and surpassed our expectations. Charlotte evidently enjoyed the fun, in her own quiet way, as much as any one, and ever after with great zest helped, when with old school-fellows, to recall the performances of the exceptional half-holidays.

About a month after the assembling of the school, one of the pupils had an illness. There was great competition among the girls for permission to sit with the invalid, but Charlotte was never of the number, though she was as assiduous in kindness and attention as the rest in spare moments; but to sit with the patient was indulgence and leisure, and these she would not permit herself.

It was shortly after this illness that Charlotte caused such a panic of terror by her thrilling relations of the wanderings of a somnambulist. She brought together all the horrors her imagination could create, from surging seas, raging breakers, towering castle walls, high precipices, invisible chasms and dangers. Having wrought these materials to the highest pitch of effect, she brought out, in almost cloud-height, her somnambulist, walking on shaking turrets,—all told in a voice that conveyed more than words alone can express. A shivering terror seized the recovered invalid; a pause ensued; then a subdued cry of pain came from Charlotte herself, with a terrified command to others to call for help. She was in bitter distress. Something like remorse seemed to linger in her mind after this incident; for weeks there was no prevailing upon her to resume her tales, and she never again created terrors for her listeners. Tales, however, were made again in time, till Miss W. discovered there was "late talking." That was forbidden; but understanding it was "late talk" only which was pro-

THE "FIELD HEAD" OF SHIRLEY.

THE "BRIARFIELD" CHURCH OF SHIRLEY.

hibited, we talked and listened to tales again, not expecting to hear Miss C. H. W. say, one morning, "All the ladies who talked last night must pay fines. I am sure Miss Brontë and Miss —— were not of the number." Miss Brontë and Miss —— were, however, transgressors like the rest, and rather enjoyed the fact of having to pay like them, till they saw Miss W.'s grieved and disappointed look. It was then a distress that they had failed where they were reckoned upon, though unintentionally. This was the only school fine Charlotte ever incurred.

At the close of the first half-year, Charlotte bore off three prizes. For one she had to draw lots with her friend —a moment of painful suspense to both; for neither wished to deprive the other of her reward. Happily, Charlotte won it, and so had the gratifying pleasure of carrying home three tangible proofs of her goodness and industry. Miss W. had two badges of conduct for her pupils which were wonderfully effective, except with the most careless. A black ribbon, worn in the style of the Order of the Garter, which the pupils passed from one to another for any breach of rules, unladylike manners, or incorrect grammar. Charlotte might, in her very earliest school-days, have worn "the mark," as we styled it, but I never remember her having it. The silver medal, which was the badge for the fulfillment of duties, she won the right to in her first half-year. This she never afterwards forfeited, and it was presented to her on leaving school. She was only three half-years at school. In this time she went through all the elementary teaching contained in our school-books. She was in the habit of committing long pieces of poetry to memory, and seemed to do so with real enjoyment and hardly any effort.

In these early days, whenever she was certain of being quite alone with her friend, she would talk much of her two dead sisters, Maria and Elizabeth. Her love for them was most intense; a kind of adoration dwelt in her feelings which, as she conversed, almost imparted itself to her listener.

She described Maria as a little mother among the rest, superhuman in goodness and cleverness. But the most touching of all were the revelations of her sufferings, —how she suffered with the sensibility of a grown-up person, and endured with a patience and fortitude that were Christ-like. Charlotte would still weep and suffer when thinking of her. She talked of Elizabeth also, but never with the anguish of expression which accompanied

her recollections of Maria. When surprise was expressed that she should know so much about her sisters when they were so young, and she herself still younger, she said she began to analyze character when she was five years old, and instanced two guests who were at her home for a day or two, and of whom she had taken stock, and of whom after-knowledge confirmed first impressions.

The following lines, though not regarded of sufficient merit for publication in the volume of poems, yet have an interest, as they depict her then desolated heart:—

MEMORY.

When the dead in their cold graves are lying
Asleep, to wake never again!
When past are their smiles and their sighing,
Oh, why should their memories remain?
Though sunshine and spring may have lightened
The wild flowers that blow on their graves,
Though summer their tombstones have brightened,
And autumn have palled them with leaves,
And winter have wildly bewailed them
With his dirge-wind as sad as a knell,
And the shroud of his snow-wreath have veiled them,
Still—how deep in our bosoms they dwell!

The shadow and sun-sparkle vanish,
The cloud and the light fleet away,
But man from his heart may not banish
Even thoughts that are torment to stay.
When quenched is the glow of the ember,
When the life-fire ceases to burn,
Oh! why should the spirit remember?
Oh! why should the parted return?

During one of our brief holidays Charlotte was guest in a family who had known her father when he was curate in their parish. They were naturally inclined to show kindness to his daughter, but the kindness here took a form which was little agreeable. They had had no opportunity of knowing her abilities or disposition, and they took her shyness and smallness as indications of extreme youth. She was slow, very slow, to express anything that bordered on ingratitude, but here she was mortified and hurt. "They took me for a child, and treated me just like one," she said. I can now recall the expression of that ever honest face as she added, "one tall lady *would* nurse me."

The tradition of a lady ghost who moved about in rustling silk in the upper stories of Roe Head had a great charm for Charlotte. She was a ready listener to any girl who could relate stories of others having seen her; but on Miss W. hearing us talk of our ghost, she adopted an effective measure for putting our belief in such an existence

to the test, by selecting one or other from among us to ascend the stairs after the dimness of evening hours had set in, to bring something down which could easily be found. No ghost made herself visible even to the frightened imaginations of the foolish and the timid; the whitened face of apprehension soon disappeared, nerves were braced, and a general laugh soon set us all right again.

It was while Charlotte was at school that she imbibed the germ of many of those characters which she afterwards produced in *Shirley;* but no one could have imagined that, in the unceasing industry of her daily applications, she was receiving any kind of impress external to her school-life.

She was particularly impressed with the goodness and saintliness of one of Miss W.'s guests,—the Miss Ainley of *Shirley*, long since gone to her rest. The character is not of course a literal portrait, for the very reasons Charlotte herself gave. She said, "You are not to suppose any of the characters in *Shirley* intended as literal portraits. It would not suit the rules of art nor of my own feelings to write in that style. We only suffer reality to *suggest*, never to *dictate*. Qualities I have seen, loved, and admired, are here and there put in as decorative gems, to be preserved in that setting." I may remark here that nothing angered Charlotte more, than for any one to suppose they could not be in her society without incurring the risk of "being put in her books." She always stoutly maintained she never thought of persons in this light when she was with them.

In the seldom recurring holidays Charlotte made sometimes short visits with those of her companions whose homes were within reach of school. Here she made acquaintance with the scenes and prominent characters of the Luddite period; her father materially helped to fix her impressions, for he had held more than one curacy in the very neighbourhood which she describes in *Shirley*. He was present in some of the scenes, an active participator as far as his position permitted. Sometimes on the defensive, sometimes aiding the sufferers, uniting his strength and influence with the Mr. Helstone of *Shirley*. Between these two men there seems to have been in some respects a striking affinity of character which Charlotte was not slow to perceive, and she blended the two into one, though she never personally beheld the original of Mr. Helstone, except once when she was ten years old. He was a man of remarkable vigor and energy, both of mind and will. An absolute disciplinarian, he was sometimes called "Duke Ecclesiastic," a very Wellington in the Church.

Mr. Brontë used to delight in recalling the days he spent in the vicinity of this man. Many a breakfast hour he enlivened by his animated relations of his friend's unflinching courage and dauntless self-reliance,—and how the ignorant and prejudiced population around misunderstood and misrepresented his worthiest deeds. In depicting the Luddite period Charlotte had the power of giving an almost literal description of the scenes then enacted, for, in addition to her father's personal acquaintance with what occurred, she had likewise the aid of authentic records of the eventful time, courteously lent to her by the editors of the *Leeds Mercury*.

I must not forget to state that no girl in the school was equal to Charlotte in Sunday lessons. Her acquaint-

THE HOUSE THAT CHARLOTTE VISITED.

ance with Holy Writ surpassed others in this as in everything else. She was very familiar with all the sublimest passages, especially those in Isaiah, in which she took great delight. Her confirmation took place while she was at school, and in her preparation for that, as in all other studies, she distinguished herself by application and proficiency.

At school she acquired that habit which she and her sisters kept up to the very last, that of pacing to and fro in the room. In days when out-of-door exercise was impracticable, Miss Wooler would join us in our evening hour of relaxation and converse (for which she had rare talent); her pupils used to hang about her as she walked

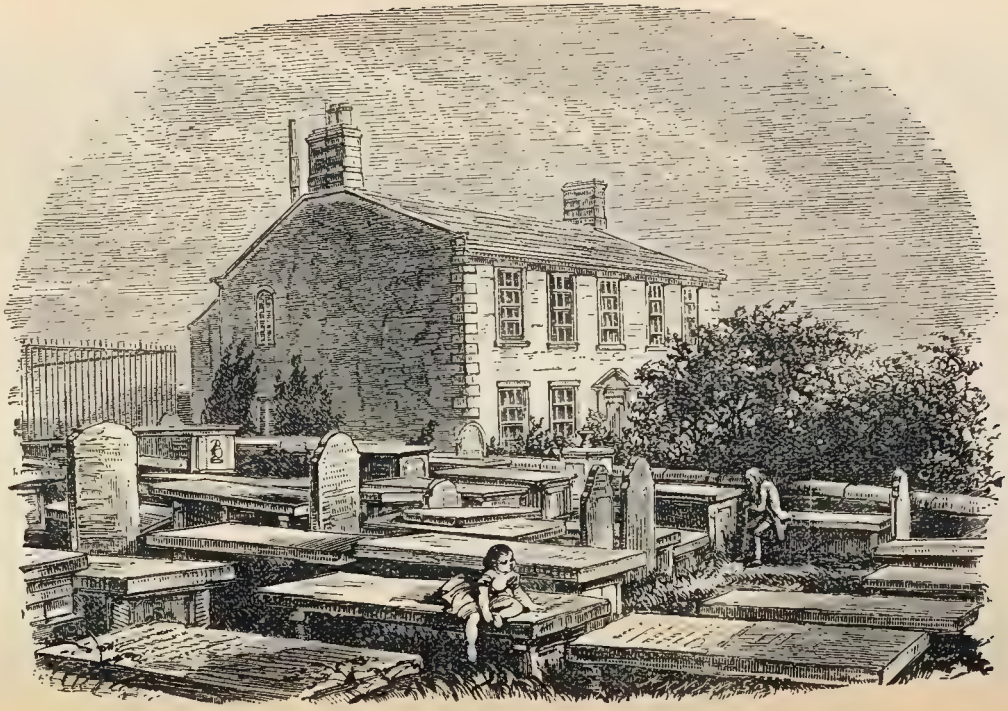
up and down the room, delighted to listen to her, or have a chance of being nearest in the walk. The last day Charlotte was at school she seemed to realize what a sedate, hard-working season it had been to her. She said, "I should for once like to feel *out and out* a school-girl; I wish something would happen! Let us run round the fruit garden [running was what she never did]; perhaps we shall meet some one, or we may have a fine for trespass." She evidently was longing for some never-to-be-forgotten incident. Nothing, however, arose from her little enterprise. She had to leave school as calmly and quietly as she had there lived.

CHARLOTTE'S EARLY LIFE AT HAWORTH.

Charlotte's first visit from Haworth was made about three months after she left school. She travelled in a two-wheeled gig, the only conveyance to be had in Haworth except the covered cart which brought her to school. Mr. Brontë sent Branwell as an escort; he was *then* a very dear brother, as dear to Charlotte as her own soul; they were in perfect accord of taste and feeling, and it was mutual delight to be together.

Branwell probably had never been far from home before! he was in wild ecstasy with everything. He walked about in unrestrained boyish enjoyment, taking views in every direction of the old turret-roofed house, the fine chestnut trees on the lawn (one tree especially interested him because it was "iron-garthed," having been split by storms, but still flourishing in great majesty), and a large rookery, which gave to the house a good background—all these he noted and commented upon with perfect enthusiasm. He told his sister he "was leaving her in Paradise, and if she were not intensely happy she never would be!" Happy, indeed, she then was, *in himself*, for she, with her own enthusiasms, looked forward to what her brother's great promise and talent might effect. He would at this time be between fifteen and sixteen years of age.

The visit passed without much to mark it (at this distance of time) except that we crept away together from household life as much as we could. Charlotte liked to pace the plantations or seek seclusion in the fruit garden; she was safe from visitors in these retreats. She was so painfully shy she could not bear any special notice. One day, on being led in to dinner by a stranger, she trembled and nearly burst into tears; but notwithstanding her



HAWORTH PARSONAGE AND GRAVEYARD.

excessive shyness, which was often painful to others as well as herself, she won the respect and affection of all who had opportunity enough to become acquainted with her.

Charlotte's shyness did not arise, I am sure, either from vanity or self-consciousness, as some suppose shyness to arise; its source was (as Mr. Arthur Helps says very truly in one of his recent essays) in her "not being understood." She felt herself apart from others; they did not *understand* her, and she keenly felt the distance.

My first visit to Haworth was full of novelty and freshness. The scenery for some miles before we reached Haworth was wild and uncultivated, with hardly any population; at last we came to what seemed a terrific hill, such a steep declivity no one thought of riding down it; the horse had to be carefully led. We no sooner reached the foot of this hill than we had to begin to mount again, over a narrow, rough, stone-paved road; the horses' feet seemed to catch at boulders, as if climbing. When we reached the top of the village there was apparently no outlet, but we were directed to drive into an entry which just admitted the gig; we wound round in this entry and then saw the church close at hand, and we entered on the short lane which led to the parsonage gateway. Here Charlotte was waiting, having caught the sound of the approaching gig. When greetings and introductions were over, Miss Branwell (the aunt of the Brontës) took possession of their guest and treated her with the care and solicitude due to a weary traveller. Mr. Brontë, also, was stirred out of his usual retirement by his own kind consideration, for not only the guest but the man-servant and the horse were to be made comfortable. He made enquiries about the man, of his length of service, &c., with the kind purpose of making a few moments of conversation agreeable to him.

Even at this time, Mr. Brontë struck me as looking very venerable, with his snow-white hair and powdered coat-collar. His manner and mode of speech always had the tone of high-bred courtesy. He was considered somewhat of an invalid, and always lived in the most abstemious and simple manner. His white cravat was not then so remarkable as it grew to be afterwards. He was in the habit of covering this cravat himself. We never saw the operation, but we always had to wind for him the white sewing-silk which he used. Charlotte said it was her father's one extravagance—he cut up yards and yards of white lutestring (silk) in covering his cravat; and like

Dr. Joseph Woolffe (the renowned and learned traveller), who, when on a visit and in a long fit of absence, "went into a clean shirt every day for a week, without taking one off," so Mr. Brontë's cravat went into new silk and new size without taking any off, till at length nearly half his head was enveloped in cravat. His liability to bronchial attacks, no doubt, attached him to this increasing growth of cravat.

Ever truly and
respectfully Yours,
P. Brontë

Miss Branwell was a very small, antiquated little lady. She wore caps large enough for half a dozen of the present fashion, and a front of light auburn curls over her forehead. She always dressed in silk. She had a horror of the climate so far north, and of the stone floors in the parsonage. She amused us by clicking about in pattens whenever she had to go into the kitchen or look after household operations.

She talked a great deal of her younger days; the gayeties of her dear native town, Penzance, in Cornwall;

the soft, warm climate, etc. The social life of her younger days she used to recall with regret; she gave one the idea that she had been a belle among her own home acquaintances. She took snuff out of a very pretty gold snuff-box, which she sometimes presented to you with a little laugh, as if she enjoyed the slight shock and astonishment visible in your countenance. In summer she spent part of the afternoon in reading aloud to Mr. Brontë. In the winter evenings she must have enjoyed this; for she and Mr. Brontë had often to finish their discussions on what she had read when we all met for tea. She would be very lively and intelligent, and tilt arguments against Mr. Brontë without fear.

"Tabby," the faithful, trustworthy old servant, was very quaint in appearance—very active, and, in these days, the general servant and factotum. We were all "childer" and "bairns," in her estimation. She still kept to her duty of walking out with the "childer," if they went any distance from home, unless Branwell were sent by his father as a protector. Poor "Tabby," in later days, after she had been attacked with paralysis, would most anxiously look out for such duties as she was still capable of. The post-man was her special point of attention. She did not approve of the inspection which the younger eyes of her fellow-servant bestowed on his deliveries. She jealously seized them when she could, and carried them off with hobbling step, and shaking head and hand, to the safe custody of Charlotte.

Emily Brontë had by this time acquired a lithesome, graceful figure. She was the tallest person in the house, except her father. Her hair, which was naturally as beautiful as Charlotte's, was in the same unbecoming tight curl and frizz, and there was the same want of complexion. She had very beautiful eyes—kind, kindling, liquid eyes; but she did not often look at you; she was too reserved. Their color might be said to be dark gray, at other times dark blue, they varied so. She talked very little She and Anne were like twins—inseparable companions, and in the very closest sympathy, which never had any interruption.

Anne—dear, gentle Anne—was quite different in appearance from the others. She was her aunt's favorite. Her hair was a very pretty, light brown, and fell on her neck in graceful curls. She had lovely violet-blue eyes, fine penciled eyebrows, and clear, almost transparent complexion. She still pursued her studies, and especially her sewing, under the surveillance of her aunt. Emily had now begun to have the disposal of her own time.

Branwell studied regularly with his father, and used to paint in oils, which was regarded as study for what might be eventually his profession. All the household entertained the idea of his becoming an artist, and hoped he would be a distinguished one.

In fine and suitable weather delightful rambles were made over the moors, and down into the glens and ravines that here and there broke the monotony of the moorland. The rugged bank and rippling brook were treasures of delight. Emily, Anne, and Branwell used to ford the streams, and sometimes placed stepping-stones for the other two; there was always a lingering delight in these spots,—every moss, every flower, every tint and form, were noted and enjoyed. Emily especially had a gleesome delight in these nooks of beauty,—her reserve for the time vanished. One long ramble made in these early days was far away over the moors to a spot familiar to Emily and Anne, which they called "The Meeting of the Waters." It was a small oasis of emerald green turf, broken here and there by small clear springs; a few large stones served as resting-places; seated here, we were hidden from all the world, nothing appearing in view but miles and miles of heather, a glorious blue sky, and brightening sun. A fresh breeze wafted on us its exhilarating influence; we laughed and made mirth of each other, and settled we would call ourselves the quartette. Emily, half reclining on a slab of stone, played like a young child with the tadpoles in the water, making them swim about, and then fell to moralizing on the strong and the weak, the brave and the cowardly, as she chased them with her hand. No serious care or sorrow had so far cast its gloom on nature's youth and buoyancy, and nature's simplest offerings were fountains of pleasure and enjoyment.

The interior of the now far-famed parsonage lacked drapery of all kinds. Mr. Brontë's horror of fire forbade curtains to the windows; they never had these accessories to comfort and appearance till long after Charlotte was the only inmate of the family sitting-room,—she then ventured on the innovation when her friend was with her; it did not please her father, but it was not forbidden.

There was not much carpet anywhere except in the sitting-room, and on the study floor. The hall floor and stairs were done with sand-stone, always beautifully clean, as everything was about the house; the walls were not papered, but stained in a pretty dove-coloured tint; hair-seated chairs and mahogany tables, book-shelves in the

HAWORTH VILLAGE.

HAWORTH CHURCH.

study, but not many of these elsewhere. Scant and bare indeed, many will say, yet it was not a scantness that made itself felt. Mind and thought, I had almost said elegance but certainly refinement, diffused themselves over all, and made nothing really wanting.

A little later on, there was the addition of a piano. Emily, after some application, played with precision and brilliancy. Anne played also, but she preferred soft harmonies and vocal music. She sang a little; her voice was weak, but very sweet in tone.

Mr. Brontë's health caused him to retire early. He assembled his household for family worship at eight o'clock; at nine he locked and barred the front door, always giving as he passed the sitting-room door a kindly admonition to the "children" not to be late; half-way up the stairs he stayed his steps to wind up the clock, the clock that in after days seemed to click like a dirge in the refrain of Longfellow's poem, "The old Clock on the Stairs:"—

"Forever—never!
Never—forever!"

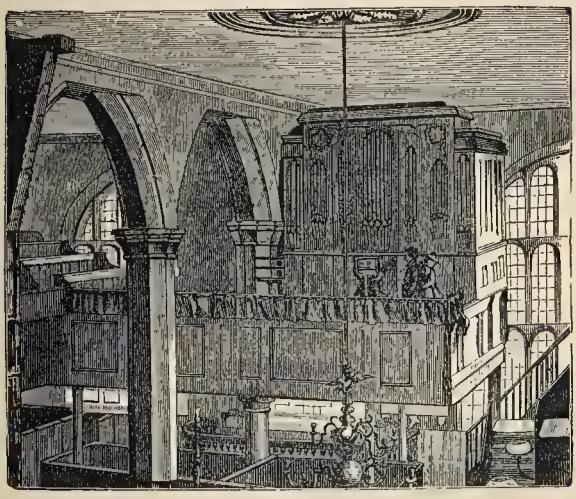
Every morning was heard the firing of a pistol from Mr. Brontë's room window,—it was the discharging of the loading which was made every night. Mr. Brontë's tastes led him to delight in the perusal of battle-scenes, and in following the artifice of war; had he entered on military service instead of ecclesiastical he would probably have had a very distinguished career. The self-denials and privations of camp-life would have agreed entirely with his nature, for he was remarkably independent of the luxuries and comforts of life. The only dread he had was of *fire*, and this dread was so intense it caused him to prohibit all but silk or woollen dresses for his daughters; indeed, for any one to wear any other kind of fabric was almost to forfeit his respect.

Mr. Brontë at times would relate strange stories, which had been told to him by some of the oldest inhabitants of the parish, of the extraordinary lives and doings of people who had resided in far-off, out-of-the-way places, but in contiguity with Haworth,—stories which made one shiver and shrink from hearing; but they were full of grim humor and interest to Mr. Brontë and his children, as revealing the characteristics of a class in the human race, and as such Emily Brontë has stereotyped them in her *Wuthering Heights*.

During Miss Branwell's reign at the parsonage, the love of animals had to be kept in due subjection. There

INTERIOR OF HAWORTH CHURCH.

was then but one dog, which was admitted to the parlor at stated times. Emily and Anne always gave him a portion of their breakfast, which was, by their own choice, the old north country diet of oatmeal porridge. Later on, there were three household pets—the tawny, strong-limbed "Keeper," Emily's favorite: he was so completely under her control, she could quite easily make him spring and roar like a lion. She taught him this kind of occasional play without any coercion. "Flossy,"—long, silky-haired, black and white "Flossy,"—was Anne's favorite; and black "Tom," the tabby, was everybody's favorite. It received such gentle treatment it seemed to have lost cat's



THE ORGAN LOFT OVER BRONTË TABLET AND PEW.

nature, and subsided into luxurious amiability and contentment. The Brontës' love of dumb creatures made them very sensitive of the treatment bestowed upon them. For any one to offend in this respect was with them an infallible bad sign, and a blot on the disposition.

The services in church in these days were such as can only be seen (if ever seen again) in localities like Haworth. The people assembled, but it was apparently to *listen*. Any part beyond that was quite out of their reckoning. All through the prayers, a stolid look of apathy was fixed on the generality of their faces. There they sat, or leaned, in

their pews ; some few, perhaps, were resting, after a long walk over the moors. The children, many of them in clogs (or sabots), pattered in from the school after service had commenced, and pattered out again before the sermon. The sexton, with a long staff, continually walked round in the aisles, "knobbing" sleepers when he dare, shaking his head at and threatening unruly children ; but when the sermon began there was a change. Attitudes took the listening forms, eyes were turned on the preacher. It was curious, now, to note the expression. A rustic, untaught intelligence, gleamed in their faces ; in some, a daring, doubting, questioning look, as if they would like to offer some defiant objection. Mr. Brontë always addressed his hearers in extempore style. Very often he selected a parable from one of the Gospels, which he explained in the simplest manner—sometimes going over his own words and explaining them also, so as to be perfectly intelligible to the lowest comprehension.

The parishioners respected Mr. Brontë because, as one of them said, "he's a grand man ; he lets other folks' business alone." No doubt Mr. Brontë's knowledge of human nature made him aware that this was the best course to pursue, till their independence had acquired a more civilized standard. There were exceptions, however, among them. Two or three individuals deserve particular note—they were men remarkable for self-culture and intelligence. One, it was said, vied with Mr. Brontë himself in his knowledge of the dead languages. He and another had, in addition to their mental stamina, such stalwart frames and stature they looked capable of doing duty as guards to the whole village. The third individual was an ailing, suffering man ; but he wrote such a critique on Charlotte's writings, when they became known, that it was valued more than any other coming from such a source. The villagers would have liked Tabby to talk to them about the family in the parsonage ; but Tabby was invincible and impenetrable. When they asked her "if they were not fearfully larn'd," she left them in a "huff;" but she did not deny her "childer" the laugh she knew they would have if she told them the village query.

Haworth of the present day, like many other secluded places, has made a step onwards, in that it has now its railway station and its institutions for the easy acquirement of learning, politics, and literature. The parsonage is quite another habitation from the parsonage of former days. The garden, which was nearly all grass, and possessed

only a few stunted thorns and shrubs, and a few currant bushes which Emily and Anne treasured as their own bit of fruit-garden, is now a perfect Arcadia of floral culture and beauty. At first the alteration, in spite of its improvement, strikes one with heart-ache and regret; for it is quite impossible, even in imagination, to people those rooms with their former inhabitants. But after-thought shows one the folly of such regret; for what the Brontës cared for and *lived* in most were the surroundings of nature, the free expanse of hill and mountain, the purple heather, the dells, and glens, and brooks, the broad sky view, the whistling winds, the snowy expanse, the starry heavens, and the charm of that solitude and seclusion which sees things from a distance without the disturbing atmosphere which lesser minds are apt to create. For it was not the seclusion of a *solitary* person, such as Charlotte endured in after days, and which in time becomes awfully oppressive and injurious. It was solitude and seclusion shared and enjoyed with intelligent companionship, and intense family affection.

In Memory of
Maria, wife of the Rev'd P. Bronte, A.B., Minister of Haworth:
She died Sept'r 15th, 1821, in the 39th year of her age.
Also of Maria, their daughter; who died May 6th, 1825, in the 12th year of her age.
Also of Elizabeth, their Daughter; who died June 15th, 1825, in the 11th year of her age.
Also of Patrick Branwell, their son; who died Sept'r 24th, 1848, aged 31 years.
Also of Emily Jane, their daughter; who died Dec'r 19th, 1848, aged 30 years.
Also of Anne, their daughter; who died May 28th, 1849, aged 29 years;
She was buried at the Old Church, Scarborough.
Also of Charlotte, their daughter; wife of the Rev'd A. B. Nicholls, B. A.
She died March 31st, 1855, in the 39th year of her age.
Also of the aforenamed Rev'd P. Bronte, A. B., who died June 7th, 1861, in the 85th year of his age; having been Incumbent of Haworth for upwards of 41 years.
"The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law: but thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. xv. 56, 57.

THE NEW BRONTË TABLET.

THE LAST SKETCH.

Being an introduction by William Makepeace Thackeray, to a fragment of a story by Charlotte Brontë, entitled "Emma," which appeared in the Cornhill Magazine, vol. 1, pp. 487-498., 1860. This story, and the introduction by Thackeray, are reprinted by special permission of Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co.

Not many days since I went to visit a house where in former years I had received many a friendly welcome. We went in to the owner's—an artist's—studio. Prints, pictures, and sketches hung on the walls as I had last seen and remembered them. The implements of the painter's art were there. The light which had shone upon so many, many hours of patient and cheerful toil, poured through the northern window upon print and bust, lay figure and sketch, and upon the easel before which the good, the gentle, the beloved Leslie laboured. In this room the busy brain had devised, and the skilful hand executed, I know not how many of the noble works which have delighted the world with their beauty and charming humour. Here the poet called up into pictorial presence, and informed with life, grace, beauty, infinite friendly mirth and wondrous naturalness of expression, the people of whom his dear books told him the stories,—his Shakspeare, his Cervantes, his Molière, his Le Sage. There was his last work on the easel—a beautiful fresh smiling shape of Titania, such as his sweet guileless fancy imagined the *Midsummer Night's* queen to be. Gracious, and pure, and bright, the sweet smiling image glimmers on the canvas. Fairy elves, no doubt, were to have been grouped around their mistress in laughing clusters. Honest Bottom's grotesque head and form are indicated as reposing by the side of the consummate beauty. The darkling forest would have grown around them, with the stars glittering from the midsummer sky: the flowers at the queen's feet, and the boughs and foliage about her, would have been peopled with gambolling sprites and fays. They were dwelling in the artist's mind no doubt, and would have been developed by that patient, faithful, admirable genius: but the busy brain stopped working, the skilful hand fell lifeless, the loving, honest heart ceased to beat. What was she to have been—that fair Titania—when perfected by the patient skill of the poet, who in imagination saw the sweet innocent figure, and with tender courtesy and caresses, as it were, posed and shaped and

traced the fair form? Is there record kept anywhere of fancies conceived, beautiful, unborn? Some day will they assume form in some yet undeveloped light? If our bad unspoken thoughts are registered against us, and are written in the awful account, will not the good thoughts unspoken, the love and tenderness, the pity, beauty, charity, which pass through the breast, and cause the heart to throb with silent good, find a remembrance, too? A few weeks more, and this lovely offspring of the poet's conception would have been complete—to charm the world with its beautiful mirth. May there not be some sphere unknown to us where it may have an existence? They say our words, once out of our lips, go travelling in *omne ævum*, reverberating for ever and ever. If our words, why not our thoughts? If the Has Been, why not the Might Have Been?

Some day our spirits may be permitted to walk in galleries of fancies more wondrous and beautiful than any achieved works which at present we see, and our minds to behold and delight in masterpieces which poets and artists' minds have fathered and conceived only.

With a feeling much akin to that with which I looked upon the friend's—the admirable artist's—unfinished work, I can fancy many readers turning to these—the last pages which were traced by Charlotte Brontë's hand. Of the multitude that has read her books, who has not known and deplored the tragedy of her family, her own most sad and untimely fate? Which of her readers has not become her friend? Who that has known her books has not admired the artist's noble English, the burning love of truth, the bravery, the simplicity, the indignation at wrong, the eager sympathy, the pious love and reverence, the passionate honour, so to speak, of the woman? What a story is that of that family of poets in their solitude yonder on the gloomy northern moors! At nine o'clock at night, Mrs. Gaskell tells, after evening prayers, when their guardian and relative had gone to bed, the three poetesses—the three maidens, Charlotte, and Emily, and Anne—Charlotte being the "motherly friend and guardian to the other two"—"began, like restless wild animals, to pace up and down their parlour, "making out" their wonderful stories, talking over plans and projects, and thoughts of what was to be their future life."

One evening, at the close of 1854, as Charlotte Nicholls sat with her husband by the fire, listening to the howling of the wind about the house, she suddenly said to

her husband, "If you had not been with me, I must have been writing now." She then ran upstairs, and brought down, and read aloud, the beginning of a new tale. When she had finished, her husband remarked, "The critics will accuse you of repetition." She replied, "Oh! I shall alter that. I always begin two or three times before I can please myself." But it was not to be. The trembling little hand was to write no more. The heart, newly awakened to love and happiness, and throbbing with maternal hope, was soon to cease to beat; that intrepid outspeaker and champion of truth, that eager, impetuous redresser of wrong, was to be called out of the world's fight and struggle, to lay down the shining arms, and to be removed to a sphere where even a noble indignation *cor ulterius nequit lacerare*, and where truth complete, and right triumphant, no longer need to wage war.

I can only say of this lady, *vidi tantum*. I saw her first just as I rose out of an illness from which I had never thought to recover. I remember the trembling little frame, the little hand, the great honest eyes. An impetuous honesty seemed to me to characterize the woman. Twice I recollect she took me to task for what she held to be errors in doctrine. Once about Fielding we had a disputation. She spoke her mind out. She jumped too rapidly to conclusions. (I have smiled at one or two passages in the *Biography*, in which my own disposition or behaviour forms the subject of talk.) She formed conclusions that might be wrong, and built up whole theories of character upon them. New to the London world, she entered it with an independent, indomitable spirit of her own; and judged of contemporaries, and especially spied out arrogance or affectation, with extraordinary keenness of vision. She was angry with her favourites if their conduct or conversation fell below her ideal. Often she seemed to me to be judging the London folk prematurely: but perhaps the city is rather angry at being judged. I fancied an austere little Joan of Arc marching in upon us, and rebuking our easy lives, our easy morals. She gave me the impression of being a very pure, and lofty, and high-minded person. A great and holy reverence of right and truth seemed to be with her always. Such, in our brief interview, she appeared to me. As one thinks of that life so noble, so lonely—of that passion for truth—of those nights and nights of eager study, swarming fancies, invention, depression, elation, prayer; as one reads the necessarily incomplete, though most touching and admir-

able history of the heart that throbbed in this one little frame—of this one amongst the myriads of souls that have lived and died on this great earth—this great earth?—this little speck in the infinite universe of God,—with what wonder do we think of to-day, with what awe await to-morrow, when that which is now but darkly seen shall be clear! As I read this little fragmentary sketch, I think of the rest. Is it? And where is it? Will not the leaf be turned some day, and the story be told? Shall the deviser of the tale somewhere perfect the history of little EMMA'S griefs and troubles? Shall TITANIA come forth complete with her sportive court, with the flowers at her feet, the forest around her, and all the stars of summer glittering overhead?

How well I remember the delight, and wonder, and pleasure with which I read *Jane Eyre*, sent to me by an author whose name and sex were then alike unknown to me; the strange fascinations of the book; and how with my own work pressing upon me, I could not, having taken the volumes up, lay them down until they were read through! Hundreds of those who, like myself, recognized and admired that master-work of a great genius, will look with a mournful interest and regard and curiosity upon this, the last fragmentary sketch from the noble hand which wrote *Jane Eyre*.

W. M. T.

EMMA.

(A FRAGMENT OF A STORY BY CHARLOTTE BRONTË.)

CHAPTER I.

WE all seek an ideal in life. A pleasant fancy began to visit me in a certain year, that perhaps the number of human beings is few who do not find their quest at some era of life for some space more or less brief. I had certainly not found mine in youth, though the strong belief I held of its existence sufficed through all my brightest and freshest time to keep me hopeful. I had not found it in maturity. I was become resigned never to find it. I had lived certain dim years entirely tranquil and unexpectant. And now I was not sure but something was hovering round my hearth which pleased me wonderfully.

Look at it, reader. Come into my parlour and judge for yourself whether I do right to care for this thing. First, you may scan me, if you please. We shall go on better together after a satisfactory introduction and due

apprehension of identity. My name is Mrs. Chalfont. I am a widow. My house is good, and my income such as need not check the impulse either of charity or a moderate hospitality. I am not young, nor yet old. There is no silver yet in my hair, but its yellow lustre is gone. In my face wrinkles are yet to come, but I have almost forgotten the days when it wore any bloom. I married when I was very young. I lived for fifteen years a life which, whatever its trials, could not be called stagnant. Then for five years I was alone, and, having no children, desolate. Lately Fortune, by a somewhat curious turn of her wheel, placed in my way an interest and a companion.

The neighbourhood where I live is pleasant enough, its scenery agreeable, and its society civilised, though not numerous. About a mile from my house there is a ladies' school, established but lately—not more than three years since. The conductresses of this school were of my acquaintances; and though I cannot say that they occupied the very highest place in my opinion—for they had brought back from some months' residence abroad, for finishing purposes, a good deal that was fantastic, affected, and pretentious—yet I awarded them some portion of that respect which seems the fair due of all women who face life bravely, and try to make their own way by their own efforts.

About a year after the Misses Wilcox opened their school, when the number of their pupils was as yet exceedingly limited, and when, no doubt, they were looking out anxiously enough for augmentation, the entrance-gate to their little drive was one day thrown back to admit a carriage—"a very handsome, fashionable carriage," Miss Mabel Wilcox said, in narrating the circumstance afterwards—and drawn by a pair of really splendid horses. The sweep up the drive, the loud ring at the door-bell, the bustling entrance into the house, the ceremonious admission to the bright drawing-room, roused excitement enough in Fuchsia Lodge. Miss Wilcox repaired to the reception-room in a pair of new gloves, and carrying in her hand a handkerchief of French cambric.

She found a gentleman seated on the sofa, who, as he rose up, appeared a tall, fine-looking personage; at least she thought him so, as he stood with his back to the light. He introduced himself as Mr. Fitzgibbon, inquired if Miss Wilcox had a vacancy, and intimated that he wished to intrust to her care a new pupil in the shape of his daughter.

This was welcome news, for there was many a vacancy in Miss Wilcox's school-room; indeed, her establishment was as yet limited to the select number of three, and she and her sisters were looking forward with anything but confidence to the balancing of accounts at the close of their first half-year. Few objects could have been more agreeable to her then, than that to which, by a wave of the hand, Mr. Fitzgibbon now directed her attention—the figure of a child standing near the drawing-room window.

Had Miss Wilcox's establishment boasted fuller ranks —had she indeed entered well on that course of prosperity which in after years an undeviating attention to externals enabled her so triumphantly to realise—an early thought with her would have been to judge whether the acquisition now offered was likely to answer well as a show-pupil. She would have instantly marked her look, dress, &c., and inferred her value from these indicia. In those anxious commencing times, however, Miss Wilcox could scarce afford herself the luxury of such appreciation: a new pupil represented 40*l.* a year, independently of masters' terms— and 40*l.* a year was a sum Miss Wilcox needed and was glad to secure; besides, the fine carriage, the fine gentleman, and the fine name gave gratifying assurance, enough and to spare, of eligibility in the proffered connection. It was admitted, then, that there were vacancies in Fuchsia Lodge; that Miss Fitzgibbon could be received at once; that she was to learn all that the school prospectus proposed to teach; to be liable to every extra; in short, to be as expensive, and consequently as profitable a pupil, as any directress's heart could wish. All this was arranged as upon velvet, smoothly and liberally. Mr. Fitzgibbon showed in the transaction none of the hardness of the bargain-making man of business, and as little of the penurious anxiety of the straitened professional man. Miss Wilcox felt him to be "quite the gentleman." Everything disposed her to be partially inclined towards the little girl whom he, on taking leave, formally committed to her guardianship; and as if no circumstance should be wanting to complete her happy impression, the address left written on a card served to fill up the measure of Miss Wilcox's satisfaction—Conway Fitzgibbon, Esq,, May Park, Midland County. That very day three decrees were passed in the new-comer's favour:—

1st. That she was to be Miss Wilcox's bed-fellow.
2nd. To sit next her at table.
3rd. To walk out with her.

In a few days it became evident that a fourth secret clause had been added to these, viz. that Miss Fitzgibbon was to be favoured, petted, and screened on all possible occasions.

An ill-conditioned pupil, who before coming to Fuchsia Lodge had passed a year under the care of certain old-fashioned Misses Sterling, of Hartwood, and from them had picked up unpractical notions of justice, took it upon her to utter an opinion on this system of favouritism.

"The Misses Sterling," she injudiciously said, "never distinguished any girl because she was richer or better dressed than the rest. They would have scorned to do so. *They* always rewarded girls according as they behaved well to their school-fellows and minded their lessons, not according to the number of their silk dresses, and fine laces and feathers."

For it must not be forgotten that Miss Fitzgibbon's trunks, when opened, disclosed a splendid wardrobe; so fine were the various articles of apparel, indeed, that instead of assigning for their accommodation the painted deal drawers of the school bedroom, Miss Wilcox had them arranged in a mahogany bureau in her own room. With her own hands, too, she would on Sundays array the little favourite in her quilted silk pelisse, her hat and feathers, her ermine boa, and little French boots and gloves. And very self-complacent she felt when she led the young heiress (a letter from Mr. Fitzgibbon, received since his first visit, had communicated the additional particulars that his daughter was his only child, and would be the inheritress of his estates, including May Park, Midland County)—when she led her, I say, into the church, and seated her stately by her side at the top of the gallery-pew. Unbiassed observers might, indeed, have wondered what there was to be proud of, and puzzled their heads to detect the special merits of this little woman in silk—for, to speak truth, Miss Fitzgibbon was far from being the beauty of the school: there were two or three blooming little faces amongst her companions lovelier than hers. Had she been a poor child, Miss Wilcox herself would not have liked her physiognomy at all: rather, indeed, would it have repelled than attracted her; and, moreover—though Miss Wilcox hardly confessed the circumstance to herself, but, on the contrary, strove hard not to be conscious of it—there were moments when she became sensible of a certain strange weariness in continuing her system of partiality. It hardly came natural to her to show this special

distinction in this particular instance. An undefined wonder would smite her sometimes that she did not take more real satisfaction in flattering and caressing this embryo heiress—that she did not like better to have her always at her side, under her special charge. On principle Miss Wilcox continued the plan she had begun. On *principle*, for she argued with herself: This is the most aristocratic and richest of my pupils; she brings me the most credit and the most profit: therefore, I ought in justice to show her a special indulgence; which she did—but with a gradually increasing peculiarity of feeling.

Certainly, the undue favours showered on little Miss Fitzgibbon brought their object no real benefit. Unfitted for the character of playfellow by her position of favourite, her fellow-pupils rejected her company as decidedly as they dared. Active rejection was not long necessary; it was soon seen that passive avoidance would suffice; the pet was not social. No: even Miss Wilcox never thought her social. When she sent for her to show her fine clothes in the drawing-room when there was company, and especially when she had her into her parlour of an evening to be her own companion, Miss Wilcox used to feel curiously perplexed. She would try to talk affably to the young heiress, to draw her out, to amuse her. To herself the governess could render no reason why her efforts soon flagged; but this was invariably the case. However, Miss Wilcox was a woman of courage; and be the *protégée* what she might, the patroness did not fail to continue on *principle* her system of preference.

A favourite has no friends; and the observation of a gentleman, who about this time called at the Lodge and chanced to see Miss Fitzgibbon, was, "That child looks consummately unhappy:" he was watching Miss Fitzgibbon, as she walked, by herself, fine and solitary, while her school-fellows were merrily playing.

"Who is the miserable little wight?" he asked.

He was told her name and dignity.

"Wretched little soul!" he repeated; and he watched her pace down the walk and back again; marching upright, her hands in her ermine muff, her fine pelisse showing a gay sheen to the winter's sun, her large Leghorn hat shading such a face as fortunately had not its parallel on the premises.

"Wretched little soul!" reiterated this gentleman. He opened the drawing-room window, watched the bearer of the muff till he caught her eye, and then summoned her

with his finger. She came; he stooped his head down to her; she lifted her face up to him.

"Don't you play, little girl?"

"No, sir."

"No! why not? Do you think yourself better than other children?"

No answer.

"Is it because people tell you you are rich, you won't play?"

The young lady was gone. He stretched his hand to arrest her, but she wheeled beyond his reach, and ran quickly out of sight.

An only child," pleaded Miss Wilcox; "possibly spoiled by her papa, you know; we must excuse a little pettishness."

"Humph! I am afraid there is not a little to excuse."

CHAPTER II.

Mr. Ellin—the gentleman mentioned in the last chapter—was a man who went where he liked, and being a gossiping, leisurely person, he liked to go almost anywhere. He could not be rich, he lived so quietly; and yet he must have had some money, for, without apparent profession, he continued to keep a house and a servant. He always spoke of himself as having once been a worker; but if so, that could not have been very long since, for he still looked far from old. Sometimes of an evening, under a little social conversational excitement, he would look quite young; but he was changeable in mood, and complexion, and expression, and had chamelion eyes, sometimes blue and merry, sometimes grey and dark, and anon green and gleaming. On the whole he might be called a fair man, of average height, rather thin and rather wiry. He had not resided more than two years in the present neighbourhood; his antecedents were unknown there; but as the Rector, a man of good family and standing, and of undoubted scrupulousness in the choice of acquaintance, had introduced him, he found everywhere a prompt reception, of which nothing in his conduct had yet seemed to prove him unworthy. Some people, indeed, dubbed him "a character," and fancied him "eccentric;" but others could not see the appropriateness of the epithets. He always seemed to them very harmless and quiet, not always perhaps so perfectly unreserved and comprehensible as might be wished. He had a discomposing expression

in his eye; and sometimes in conversation an ambiguous diction; but still they believed he meant no harm.

Mr. Ellin often called on the Misses Wilcox; he sometimes took tea with them; he appeared to like tea and muffins, and not to dislike the kind of conversation which usually accompanies that refreshment; he was said to be a good shot, a good angler.—He proved himself an excellent gossip—he liked gossip well. On the whole he liked women's society, and did not seem to be particular in requiring difficult accomplishments or rare endowments in his female acquaintance. The Misses Wilcox, for instance, were not much less shallow than the china saucer which held their teacups; yet Mr. Ellin got on perfectly well with them, and had apparently great pleasure in hearing them discuss all the details of their school. He knew the names of all their young ladies too, and would shake hands with them if he met them walking out; he knew their examination days and gala days, and more than once accompanied Mr. Cecil, the curate, when he went to examine in ecclesiastical history.

This ceremony took place weekly, on Wednesday afternoons, after which Mr. Cecil sometimes stayed to tea, and usually found two or three lady parishioners invited to meet him. Mr. Ellin was also pretty sure to be there. Rumour gave one of the Misses Wilcox in anticipated wedlock to the curate, and furnished his friend with a second in the same tender relation; so that it is to be conjectured they made a social, pleasant party under such interesting circumstances. Their evenings rarely passed without Miss Fitzgibbon being introduced—all worked muslin and streaming sash and elaborated ringlets; others of the pupils would also be called in, perhaps to sing, to show off a little at the piano, or sometimes to repeat poetry. Miss Wilcox conscientiously cultivated display in her young ladies, thinking she thus fulfilled a duty to herself and to them, at once spreading her own fame and giving the children self-possessed manners.

It was curious to note how, on these occasions, good, genuine natural qualities still vindicated their superiority to counterfeit, artificial advantages. While "dear Miss Fitzgibbon," dressed up and flattered as she was, could only sidle round the circle with the crestfallen air which seemed natural to her, just giving her hand to the guests, then almost snatching it away, and sneaking in unmannerly haste to the place allotted to her at Miss Wilcox's side, which place she filled like a piece of furniture, neither

smiling nor speaking the evening through—while such was *her* deportment, certain of her companions, as Mary Franks, Jessy Newton, &c., handsome, open-countenanced little damsels—fearless became harmless—would enter with a smile of salutation and a blush of pleasure, make their pretty reverence at the drawing-room door, stretch a friendly little hand to such visitors as they knew, and sit down to the piano to play their well-practised duet with an innocent, obliging readiness which won all hearts.

There was a girl called Diana—the girl alluded to before as having once been Miss Sterling's pupil—a daring, brave girl, much loved and a little feared by her comrades. She had good faculties, both physical and mental—was clever, honest, and dauntless. In the schoolroom she set her young brow like a rock against Miss Fitzgibbon's pretensions; she found also heart and spirit to withstand them in the drawing-room. One evening, when the curate had been summoned away by some piece of duty directly after tea, and there was no stranger present but Mr. Ellin, Diana had been called in to play a long, difficult piece of music which she could execute like a master. She was still in the midst of her performance, when—Mr. Ellin having for the first time, perhaps, recognized the existence of the heiress by asking if she was cold—Miss Wilcox took the opportunity of launching into a strain of commendation on Miss Fitzgibbon's inanimate behaviour, terming it lady-like, modest, and exemplary. Whether Miss Wilcox's constrained tone betrayed how far she was from really feeling the approbation she expressed, how entirely she spoke from a sense of duty, and not because she felt it possible to be in any degree charmed by the personage she praised—or whether Diana, who was by nature hasty, had a sudden fit of irritability—is not quite certain, but she turned on her music-stool:—

"Ma'am," said she to Miss Wilcox, "that girl does not deserve so much praise. Her behaviour is not at all exemplary. In the schoolroom she is insolently distant. For my part I denounce her airs; there is not one of us but is as good or better than she, though we may not be as rich."

And Diana shut up the piano, took her music-book under her arm, curtsied, and vanished.

Strange to relate, Miss Wilcox said not a word at the time; nor was Diana subsequently reprimanded for this outbreak. Miss Fitzgibbon had now been three months in the school, and probably the governess had had leisure to wear out her early raptures of partiality.

Indeed, as time advanced, this evil often seemed likely to right itself; again and again it seemed that Miss Fitzgibbon was about to fall to her proper level, but then, somewhat provokingly to the lovers of reason and justice, some little incident would occur to invest her insignificance with artificial interest. Once it was the arrival of a great basket of hothouse fruit—melons, grapes, and pines—as a present to Miss Wilcox in Miss Fitzgibbon's name. Whether it was that a share of these luscious productions was imparted too freely to the nominal donor, or whether she had had a surfeit of cake on Miss Mabel Wilcox's birthday, it so befel, that in some disturbed state of the digestive organs Miss Fitzgibbon took to sleep-walking. She one night terrified the school into a panic by passing through the bedrooms, all white in her night-dress, moaning and holding out her hands as she went.

Dr. Percy was then sent for; his medicines, probably, did not suit the case; for within a fortnight after the somnambulistic feat, Miss Wilcox going upstairs in the dark, trod on something which she thought was the cat, and on calling for a light, found her darling Matilda Fitzgibbon curled round on the landing, blue, cold, and stiff, without any light in her half-open eyes, or any colour in her lips, or movement in her limbs. She was not soon roused from this fit; her senses seemed half scattered; and Miss Wilcox had now an undeniable excuse for keeping her all day on the drawing-room sofa, and making more of her than ever.

There comes a day of reckoning both for petted heiresses and partial governesses.

One clear winter morning, as Mr. Ellin was seated at breakfast, enjoying his bachelor's easy chair and damp, fresh London newspaper, a note was bought to him marked "private," and "in haste." The last injunction was vain, for William Ellin did nothing in haste—he had no haste in him; he wondered anybody should be so foolish as to hurry; life was short enough without it. He looked at the little note—three-cornered, scented, and feminine. He knew the handwriting; it came from the very lady Rumour had so often assigned him as his own. The bachelor took out a morocco case, selected from a variety of little instruments a pair of tiny scissors, cut round the seal, and read:—"Miss Wilcox's compliments to Mr. Ellin, and she should be truly glad to see him for a few minutes, if at leisure. Miss W. requires a little advice. She will reserve explanations till she sees Mr. E."

Mr. Ellin very quietly finished his breakfast; then, as it was a very fine December day—hoar and crisp, but serene, and not bitter—he carefully prepared himself for the cold, took his cane, and set out. He liked the walk; the air was still; the sun not wholly ineffectual; the path firm, and but lightly powdered with snow. He made his journey as long as he could by going round through many fields, and through winding, unfrequented lanes. When there was a tree in the way conveniently placed for support, he would sometimes stop, lean his back against the trunk, fold his arms, and muse. If Rumour could have seen him, she would have affirmed that he was thinking about Miss Wilcox; perhaps when he arrives at the Lodge his demeanour will inform us whether such an idea be warranted.

At last he stands at the door and rings the bell; he is admitted, and shown into the parlour—a smaller and a more private room than the drawing-room. Miss Wilcox occupies it; she is seated at her writing-table; she rises—not without air and grace—to receive her visitor. This air and grace she learnt in France; for she was in a Parisian school for six months, and learnt there a little French, and a stock of gestures and courtesies. No: it is certainly not impossible that Mr. Ellin may admire Miss Wilcox. She is not without prettiness, any more than are her sisters; and she and they are one and all smart and showy. Bright stone-blue is a colour they like in dress; a crimson bow rarely fails to be pinned on somewhere to give contrast; positive colours generally—grass-greens, red violets, deep yellows—are in favour with them; all harmonies are at a discount. Many people would think Miss Wilcox, standing there in her blue merino dress and pomegranate ribbon, a very agreeable woman. She has regular features; the nose is a little sharp, the lips a little thin, good complexion, light red hair. She is very business-like, very practical; she never in her life knew a refinement of feeling or of thought; she is entirely limited, respectable, and self-satisfied. She has a cool, prominent eye; sharp and shallow pupil, unshrinking and inexpansive; pale irid; light eyelashes, light brow. Miss Wilcox is a very proper and decorous person; but she could not be delicate or modest, because she is naturally destitute of sensitiveness. Her voice, when she speaks, has no vibration; her face no expression; her manner no emotion. Blush or tremor she never knew.

"What can I do for you, Miss Wilcox?" says Mr.

Ellin, approaching the writing-table, and taking a chair beside it.

"Perhaps you can advise me," was the answer; "or perhaps you can give me some information. I feel so thoroughly puzzled, and really fear all is not right."

"Where? and how?"

"I will have redress if it be possible," pursued the lady; "but how to set about obtaining it! Draw to the fire, Mr. Ellin; it is a cold day."

They both drew to the fire. She continued:—

"You know the Christmas holidays are near?"

He nodded.

"Well, about a fortnight since, I wrote, as is customary, to the friends of my pupils, notifying the day when we break up, and requesting that, if it was desired that any girl should stay the vacation, intimation should be sent accordingly. Satisfactory and prompt answers came to all the notes except one—that addressed to Conway Fitzgibbon, Esquire, May Park, Midland County—Matilda Fitzgibbon's father, you know."

"What? won't he let her go home?"

"Let her go home, my dear sir! you shall hear. Two weeks elapsed, during which I daily expected an answer; none came. I felt annoyed at the delay, as I had particularly requested a speedy reply. This very morning I had made up my mind to write again, when—what do you think the post brought me?"

"I should like to know."

"My own letter—actually my own—returned from the post-office, with an intimation—such an intimation!—but read for yourself."

She handed to Mr. Ellin an envelope; he took from it the returned note and a paper—the paper bore a hastily-scrawled line or two. It said, in brief terms, that there was no such place in Midland County as May Park, and that no such person had ever been heard of there as Conway Fitzgibbon, Esquire.

On reading this, Mr. Ellin slightly opened his eyes.

"I hardly thought it was so bad as this," said he.

"What? you did think it was bad then? You suspected that something was wrong?"

"Really! I scarcely knew what I thought or suspected. How very odd, no such place as May Park! The grand mansion, the grounds, the oaks, the deer, vanished clean away. And then Fitzgibbon himself! But you saw Fitzgibbon—he came in his carriage?"

"In his carriage!" echoed Miss Wilcox; "a most stylish equipage, and himself a most distinguished person. Do you think, after all, there is some mistake?"

"Certainly, a mistake; but when it is rectified I don't think Fitzgibbon or May Park will be forthcoming. Shall I run down to Midland County and look after these two precious objects?"

"Oh! would you be so good, Mr. Ellin? I knew you would be so kind; personal inquiry, you know—there's nothing like it."

"Nothing at all. Meantime. what shall you do with the child—the pseudo-heiress, if pseudo she be? Shall you correct her—let her know her place?"

"I think," responded Miss Wilcox, reflectively—"I think not exactly as yet! my plan is to do nothing in a hurry; we will inquire first. If after all she should turn out to be connected as was at first supposed, one had better not do anything which one might afterwards regret. No; I shall make no difference with her till I hear from you again."

"Very good. As you please," said Mr. Ellin, with that coolness which made him so convenient a councillor in Miss Wilcox's opinion. In his dry laconism she found the response suited to her outer worldliness. She thought he said enough if he did not oppose her. The comment he stinted so avariciously she did not want.

Mr. Ellin "ran down," as he said, to Midland County. It was an errand that seemed to suit him; for he had curious predilections as well as peculiar methods of his own. Any secret quest was to his taste; perhaps there was something of the amateur detective in him. He could conduct an inquiry and draw no attention. His quiet face never looked inquisitive, nor did his sleepless eye betray vigilance.

He was away about a week. The day after his return, he appeared in Miss Wilcox's presence as cool as if he had seen her but yesterday. Confronting her with that fathomless face he liked to show her, he first told her he had done nothing.

Let Mr. Ellin be as enigmatical as he would, he never puzzled Miss Wilcox. She never saw enigma in the man. Some people feared, because they did not understand him; to her it had not yet occurred to begin to spell his nature or analyze his character. If she had an impression about him, it was, that he was an idle but obliging man, not aggressive, of few words, but often convenient. Whether

he were clever and deep, or deficient and shallow, close or open, odd or ordinary, she saw no practical end to be answered by inquiry, and therefore did not inquire.

"Why had he done nothing?" she now asked.

"Chiefly because there was nothing to do."

"Then he could give her no information?"

"Not much: only this, indeed—Conway Fitzgibbon was a man of straw; May Park a house of cards. There was no vestige of such man or mansion in Midland County, or in any other shire in England. Tradition herself had nothing to say about either the name or the place. The Oracle of old deeds and registers, when consulted, had not responded.

"Who can he be, then, that came here, and who is this child?"

"That's just what I can't tell you:—an incapacity which makes me say I have done nothing."

"And how am I to get paid?"

"Can't tell you that either."

"A quarter's board and education owing, and masters' terms besides," pursued Miss Wilcox. "How infamous! I can't afford the loss."

"And if we were only in the good old times," said Mr. Ellin, "where we ought to be, you might just send Miss Matilda out to the plantations in Virginia, sell her for what she is worth, and pay yourself."

"Matilda, indeed, and Fitzgibbon! A little impostor! I wonder what her real name is?"

"Betty Hodge? Poll Smith? Hannah Jones?" suggested Mr. Ellin.

"Now," cried Miss Wilcox, "give me credit for sagacity! It's very odd, but try as I would—and I made every effort—I never could really like that child. She has had every indulgence in this house; and I am sure I made great sacrifice of feeling to principle in showing her much attention; for I could not make any one believe the degree of antipathy I have all along felt towards her."

"Yes. I can believe it. I saw it."

"Did you? Well—it proves that my discernment is rarely at fault. Her game is up now, however; and time it was. I have said nothing to her yet; but now—"

"Have her in whilst I am here," said Mr. Ellin. "Has she known of this business? Is she in the secret? Is she herself an accomplice, or a mere tool? Have her in."

Miss Wilcox rang the bell, demanded Matilda Fitzgibbon, and the false heiress soon appeared. She came in

her ringlets, her sash, and her furbelowed dress adornments—alas! no longer acceptable.

"Stand there!" said Miss Wilcox, sternly, checking her as she approached the hearth. "Stand there on the farther side of the table. I have a few questions to put to you, and your business will be to answer them. And mind—let us have the truth. *We will not endure lies.*"

Ever since Miss Fitzgibbon had been found in the fit, her face had retained a peculiar paleness and her eyes a dark orbit. When thus addressed, she began to shake and blanch like conscious guilt personified.

"Who are you?" demanded Miss Wilcox. "What do you know about yourself?"

A sort of half-interjection escaped the girl's lips; it was a sound expressing partly fear, and partly the shock the nerves feel when an evil, very long expected, at last and suddenly arrives.

"Keep yourself still, and reply, if you please," said Miss Wilcox, whom nobody should blame for lacking pity, because nature had not made her compassionate. "What is your name? We know you have no right to that of Matilda Fitzgibbon."

She gave no answer.

"I do insist upon a reply. Speak you shall, sooner or later. So you had better do it at once."

This inquisition had evidently a very strong effect upon the subject of it. She stood as if palsied, trying to speak, but apparently not competent to articulate.

Miss Wilcox did not fly into a passion, but she grew very stern and urgent; spoke a little loud; and there was a dry clamour in her raised voice which seemed to beat upon the ear and bewilder the brain. Her interest had been injured—her pocket wounded—she was vindicating her rights—and she had no eye to see, and no nerve to feel, but for the point in hand. Mr. Ellin appeared to consider himself strictly a looker-on; he stood on the hearth very quiet.

At last the culprit spoke. A low voice escaped her lips. "Oh, my head!" she cried, lifting her hands to her forehead. She staggered, but caught the door and did not fall. Some accusers might have been startled by such a cry—even silenced; not so Miss Wilcox. She was neither cruel or violent; but she was coarse, because insensible. Having just drawn breath, she went on, harsh as ever.

Mr. Ellin, leaving the hearth, deliberately paced up the room as if he were tired of standing still, and would

walk a little for a change. In returning and passing near the door and the criminal, a faint breath seemed to seek his ear, whispering his name—

"Oh, Mr. Ellin!"

The child dropped as she spoke. A curious voice—not like Mr. Ellin's, though it came from his lips—asked Miss Wilcox to cease speaking, and say no more. He gathered from the floor what had fallen on it. She seemed overcome, but unconscious. Resting beside Mr. Ellin, in a few minutes she again drew breath. She raised her eyes to him.

"Come, my little one; have no fear," said he.

Reposing her head against him, she gradually became reassured. It did not cost him another word to bring her round; even that strong trembling was calmed by the mere effects of his protection. He told Miss Wilcox, with remarkable tranquillity, but still with a certain decision, that the little girl must be put to bed. He carried her upstairs, and saw her laid there himself. Returning to Miss Wilcox, he said:

"Say no more to her. Beware, or you will do more mischief than you think or wish. That kind of nature is very different from yours. It is not possible that you should like it; but let it alone. We will talk more on the subject to-morrow. Let me question her."

BRONTË SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS.

PART XI.

TRANSACTIONS:

CONTAINING

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

AT LEEDS,

AND

A PAPER READ BEFORE THE SOCIETY.

PRINTED FOR THE SOCIETY BY
M. FIELD AND SONS, SOUTHGATE, BRADFORD.

JUNE, 1900.

NOTE.

The Council of the Brontë Society wish it to be understood that the Authors of the various Articles printed in the "Transactions" are alone responsible for the opinions expressed.

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SIXTH
ANNUAL MEETING OF THE BRONTË SOCIETY.

The Sixth Annual Meeting of the Society was held in the Philosophical Hall, Leeds, on the afternoon of the 20th of January, 1900, Mr. J. F. Greenwood presiding.

Mr. W. T. Field, the Honorary Secretary, read the Annual Report, which was moved by the Chairman, seconded by Mr. S. P. Unwin, and unanimously adopted. The Balance Sheet prepared by the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. J. J. Stead, was adopted on the motion of Mr. Halliwell Sutcliffe and seconded by Mr. W. S. Cameron. An election of the Council for ensuing year afterwards took place.

In the evening, a public meeting was held in the lecture theatre, presided over by Mr. Councillor W. E. B. Priestley, J.P., of Bradford. He was supported by the Vicar of Leeds (Dr. Gibson) and members of the Council of the Brontë Society. The Vicar gave the Society a hearty welcome to the City of Leeds, and observed that the Brontës not only belonged to Bradford and Haworth, but to all Yorkshire, and England, and indeed to the whole English race. Mr. James Fotheringham then delivered an address on "The work of Emily Brontë and the Brontë Problem," and this was followed by an interesting exhibition of lantern slides illustrating the scenes and characters of the Brontë novels, by Mr. J. J. Stead. A hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Fotheringham and Mr. Stead concluded the proceedings.

THE WORK OF EMILY BRONTË, AND THE BRONTË PROBLEM.

A Paper read before the Brontë Society, at Leeds, on January 20th, 1900.

By Mr. James Fotheringham.

It may be that this Society has come to a point at which its lines of approach to its special field of study may be somewhat changed. It has done good and useful work towards the illustration of the lives of the Brontë sisters, and certain aspects of the Brontë literature. It has shed light on questions of biography and bibliography, on the question of places, of names and people connected with the stories and with their authors.

But I understand that it is felt by your Council that on that side of matters a good deal of what is to be done has been done, and the future researches and proceedings of the Society seem likely to be devoted rather to literary criticism and interpretation than to questions of more or less external detail; and this would commend itself to the Brontë sisters; it is the spirit of their writings to show this kind of care.

Understand me, I do not for one moment, or in any degree, undervalue that other research and illumination. On the contrary, as a student of letters, I put much value on it for the full and exact interpretation of all literature. But literature as such, and in so far as it is made for any breadth of appeal, for any degree of endurance, and very certainly when it is built for immortality, is matter of the general heart of man, or at least documents of human nature. Its value lies not in its circumstances and accidents but in its substance, in the life it breathes and reveals, in its inner thought and passion, in its eternal truth and beauty.

In any case it is such a study, a study on this side of things, that I have to offer you now. I do not propose to add to your knowledge of facts; my concern is rather with the meaning of certain facts pretty well known. It is my hope to touch a certain group of facts within this Society's field of interest with the freshness of a cordial and independent appreciation.

I wish this evening to consider the work and genius of Emily Brontë, to set that work in due relation to her life, character, and circumstances, and in a subordinate way to consider the relation of that work to the question of "origins" as regards the genius and art of the Brontës.

It is not the pleasantest task in the range of Brontë study. One could no doubt more readily discourse of *Jane Eyre* or *Villette*, the best and strongest work of Charlotte. In its author's own words, *Wuthering Heights* is a somewhat grim and dreary story. A document of human nature it may be, but most readers are likely to find it rather a harsh document and to ask why did the writer conceive and carry through such a "dree" story, and present such a strange and unattractive group of persons? And yet if this be so, and most readers hold it to be so, this it may be is a reason over and above the value and interest of the work itself why a society such as this should seek to do justice to the work of the writer. If this work needs for most readers appreciative introduction it may seem well to

supply it. To do this kind of justice to the work of Emily Brontë is anyhow our scope now.

It would be out of place for me here and now to keep you over the life of Emily Brontë, though Mrs. Gaskell has done less than justice there, and did not, some of us think, quite understand Emily or her work, coming to both with a distinctly imperfect sympathy. The simple, austere, and deeply-touching story of these women of genius has been known to all cultivated people for a quarter of a century. But it will be in place, and indeed something essential to my purpose, that I should sketch the character of the woman, and her circumstances and story in relation to that and to her work.

It is a truism of criticism in our time that character, powers, and work always stand and must stand in vital relation to each other and to the circumstances amid which they were fashioned. But there are cases where the relation is very close, and what one may call pure and simple, both the temper of the writer and the circumstances of the life tending to make it so. It seems to me that Emily Brontë's is such a case. Her parentage and bias of nature, her life-long environment, and what we may term her vital education, go far to account for the woman and the writer we know, and the elements and forces in them had fuller and franker play right through her nature and her life than usually happens in the present century.

Her nature was simple, constant, pious in the old sense, loyal to the elemental things and relations of life, with an undemonstrative yet deep love of home, of the things of the past, and of her early days. Her heart was full of an unusual intensity of affection, and determination, reserved but faithful, and strong and genuine in its attachments.

From her father she had a certain nervous and passionate force of character, and of will, from her mother a delicate constitution and a certain sensibility—restrained and pretty well suppressed, but always felt. Born at Thornton and reared in Haworth, and spending nearly all her days amid the circumstances and scenery of that Yorkshire valley, of those Yorkshire hills and moors, she took deeply their impress and loved them with a responsive affection. Simple, bold, plain, bare as those hills and moors, but well and firmly grounded, and though plain and even bare, yet in touch with the deep heart of things and aware of the wonder and mystery which not only lies there, but of the ways in which life, in nature and in man,

is pierced through and through with wonder and mystery, and having seen a thousand moments of dawn and sunset, of moonlight and midnight, when the barest and simplest things and scenes were lit with an unspeakable glory and loveliness. Moorish, rustic you may say, as indeed her sister says, but alive to the poetry of the moors, to the strength of the hills, to the depth as to the simplicity of the rustic nature and character.

It is clear that the routine of life was somewhat narrow, a little dull, and rather serious in that Haworth home. They had little society, almost none that was quite congenial, except in the home itself. Their mother died when they were quite young. Their aunt was a prim person, very excellent, but inadequate to help these women. Their training at home and at school was of the old evangelical type, which discourages "Nature" and the enjoyment of life, and says or implies that the best use of this life is to get ready for another. Their early school training was of the same sort, somewhat grim and not very real.

It is further clear that Emily re-acted against this, though she never quite shook it off. A lover of natural things, she was a lover of liberty and sought a free, natural life, with quick interest in all exhibitions of such life, and yet never quite free, never buoyant, glad,—intense and rigid rather. When at school in Brussels, she struck the quick, eager "Professor," M. Héger, as a woman of power, of genius, of unusual intellectual grasp and force, of vivid nature and intense imagination, but inflexible rather. And she would not imitate his French masterpieces,—she had too stiff a self-respect and independence, too exigent a regard for nature, and the rights of her own mind. All through, she drew largely, too largely, upon her own mind, on her own observations, on her own field of reflection and experience. She took her stand too much and too exigently on her own personality.

She was always miserable away from home. She broke down once in that situation, and came pretty near doing so again, supporting herself by sheer resolution and sense of duty. And when she returned home from Brussels after her aunt's death, to care for her father and watch over her brother, it was with a simple sense of duty, and little if any feeling of self-denial, in spite of the narrowness of her task and the deepening gloom of the domestic circumstances—with her brother nervelessly and miserably going to ruin because, forsooth, the world would not square itself to his self-esteem, nor arrange itself to the pattern of his

desires, to put the moral situation mildly as regards Branwell Brontë. It was a brave and loyal, but grim, exacting, depressing task that she faced and bore through, generously and with truest valour; and what knowledge of dark and sad realities of life it must have brought her, colouring deeply of course all her later thinking, and the brooding spirit of her imaginative mind.

There is, I think, no portrait of Emily yet given to the public, but with the help of the "portrait" given in *Shirley* one can pretty well imagine what she was like. One can see the pale, expressive face, the nervous yet vigorous physique, the lithe shape, the straight graceful figure, the alert and pensive, musing and mirthful, the mocking defiant yet tender countenance, the clear, piercing, touching eyes, as of a "she-eagle," the taper fingers, interlacing and pressing each other hard while she talked. One may hear, too, the vibrating voice, touched with passion, strung by will. She had lived with, and she loved, the fair wild things of Nature on the moors, the beasts and birds, the long grass, the heather, and "the wind upon the heath," the sounds and the silence of the free large spaces of the moors and the sky, and her own figure and face had surely not a little of the temper and the beauty of wild and quiet things and places. Tender and kind she could be, friendly with equals, proud rather to superiors, passionately just to the poor and those in trouble, simple with all unaffected persons. She was at times capricious, wilful; she could kindle and flash, and had a look at times of "a thing made of fire and air."

In the judgment of some, Emily had the strongest, keenest, most original mind of these remarkable sisters. I do not ask this Society to discuss that question of comparative criticism, nor do I now advance that view, but it is the fact that Emily is conspicuous for vividness of mind, for freshness of perception, for force of judgment, for sincerity of temper and of speech. She had a fund of passion and a fire no circumstances could quench, an independence nothing could subdue. At the core of her mind was a keen care for and interest in the play of her own powers, at the core of her character a proud self-respect, and, we may say, as the very soul of her ethics and her faith too, a most living and intense personality.

Some of her critics blame her for this temper and quality. It has its defects, of course, as all strong qualities have. It is scarcely a *social* quality. It is not an easy medium for every day intercourse, and the thousand little

exchanges which are so important in the common life. But it is a *power* both in the records of character and of literature. It heightens perception, it kindles speech, it quickens and deepens insight. It is "an ardour" not "of the blood" but of the soul, and it projects and creates the facts and experience of souls.

This, then, was the woman Emily Brontë, briefly estimated, simply described, and set in relation to the circumstances of her life. We turn to *the work this woman did in those circumstances*, with such qualities, such culture, in such environment.

She has left little, as you are aware, and as she died early, what she has left is somewhat immature, and even in certain respects and places crude. The world, we are told, goes by what has been well done, and is cold to all that might have been, and these facts, with the work's quality of intense individuality, have stood in the way of a fair appreciation in many minds of both writer and work.

The whole of her writings consist of a few pages of poetry, and the story we have named.

Of the poems, I would say here only a little, as we are not now concerned with the poems in themselves, but with them only as they throw light on the character and genius of the writer.

Her poetry was the first part of Emily Brontë's work to seek the favour of the public, that is of course the poems published in 1846, though to these must be added the poems published by Charlotte after her sister's death, since these have some of the best of her verses.

It has seemed to some critics that but for the fame of these sisters on other grounds, their poems would not have attracted any notice or had any interest. Now, though I must grant that of very many of the poems of Charlotte and Anne, it is less true of the work of Emily as a whole, and it is quite wrong of the best of Emily's work. I will allow that even the best of this work, with the exception of some half-dozen poems possibly, has defects which are soon perceived, defects of metre, construction, diction. There is a certain bareness and clumsiness. The metres are little varied and not well turned, while diction and imagery often fail to satisfy or even to please. But with all that there is a grip of passion, a quality and light of imagination, a fire and directness of speech, a grasp and force of thought, at times an insight and glow of the spirit, that give these poems fuller value and deeper interest than a good many verses that are more musical and better finished.

It is scarcely easy to trace Emily's teachers and masters in the art of poetry, nor can we now attempt to do so, but so much is clear that our old ballad literature, and our newer romantic literature, our literature of Nature, and of the deeper, keener passion and thought had kindled her genius here. She is romantic in her temper and phrasing. In the keen play of passion and imagination she is romantic, and she is so in her simplicity and fire. There are many flashes of what the early romanticists would have called the supernatural in the few poems she has left, and some of those words that touch the heart. Her form is lyrical, and you feel the sincerity of the poems as of all her work.

You will see also in them the aspects of experience, the facts of life, that impressed and moved her. Her sister speaks of the poems as "wild, melancholy, elevating." And they are on the whole occupied with the stern aspects of nature, and the austere aspects of life: the moors, the stars, the night, and the night-wind, the outcast mother, the prisoner, the wanderer from the fold—sorrow, ruin, sin, death. It is true they sing also of brighter things and moods, of summer and the song of birds, and the thousand lyres of the heather in June, of day-dreams, of hope, of fancy, but they are mostly shadowed by the darker things of the human lot, and the nature they know is that of the Haworth moors. They are not pessimistic, but they certainly are austere rather, and distinctly stoical.

Their moral quality is what M. Héger would have called masculine. There is the thrill of a strong nature in them, the force of a fearless and resolute spirit. Here is one who will see things for herself, who will go through with her own experience, who will frankly face life, and will stand to the last master of herself and thus of Fate—"a chainless soul with courage to endure." For her, as for many a brave and high-strung nature, life's law seems pretty largely a law of renunciation,—the most useful virtue the power to go without and hold yourself in reserve. She professes herself in fact an "old stoic." Riches, love, fame, the pleasures and the honours of life, the things so many pursue and cling to, she has seen through them and she asks only for liberty—that is scope to be herself up to the height and always, and strength to bear resiliently all that may come. On another great matter her note is strong and distinctive: she saw that her life was to be short, she felt with her passion and grasp that life at its longest is brief. She saw the law of death sweeping all lives away, seeming to triumph over all wills, powers, persons. But

she held that spiritual force is the most real, the most precious of all things, and by lofty assertion of that high and pure force in herself, she dared to draw the conclusion that death must be good, cannot be what it seems, and that beyond and above death is life. What lives lives for ever. Moral will is life and surely endures.

You see, then, that I take the best of these poems of Emily Brontë as words of genius, saying out and saying well things of life and nature, and above all, from our present point of view, as documents of her own nature, as giving pure and striking expression to her ethical spirit, and to one of the strongest and surest principles of her own mind, her proud principle of spiritual faith and self-conservation.

But *Wuthering Heights* is Emily's chief work, and a monument of her power, greater and better finished, than even her sister Charlotte understood.

The *critical history* of *Wuthering Heights* is that of many works of distinctive or original power, or of marked individuality. It was long undervalued or misunderstood. It was long the best abused, the least popular is too mild a term, of the Brontë writings. I suppose that even now if you took a group of your own members you would find a dozen who had read and liked *Jane Eyre* or *Shirley* for one who had cordial interest in *Wuthering Heights*. *Jane Eyre* was indeed condemned by some and had to fight her way, but the distaste for this book long survived. It was indeed, as Charlotte says, in her fine *Biographical Notice of Ellis Bell*, with both wit and justice, it was a case of the astrologers and soothsayers being again gathered before a certain handwriting on the wall, and unable to read the characters, not to speak of making known the interpretation. It was some time before any "Chaldean" was found with sufficient insight to read the writing, before a reviewer was found with an eye for the merit or meaning of the book. And then when Mr. S. Dobell, to his credit, saw its power, felt its freshness, he insisted on giving it to Charlotte, not seeing that Charlotte could not have written it. Mr. Dobell's criticism in the *Palladium* in 1851 was discerning. And since Dobell ventured to find merit and genius in the book a few others have written well of it. It still receives less than its due, and those who value it are sometimes thought to do so from a liking for what is strained and violent.

It is a strange work; it has faults and defects that offend the critics of literature. It has a harsh theme and an unpleasant tone, that tend to shut off those who read

only for pleasure. It has faults of style, defects of construction. It has errors of grammar, mistakes in its use of words, a certain affectation in diction, and either the author or some one failed in certain instances to spell the English language correctly. It has, I said, defects of construction. The machinery of the story is not well devised; the long story, told in such quaint circumstances, broken off to be resumed, still in the mouth of a servant, who is introduced into certain scenes where she has no right to be present, and could in fact scarcely have been so, simply that she may tell the story, the number of lengthy narratives brought in at different parts and told through other persons, and the final break in the structure when Mr. Lockwood to whom it has been told takes up the story himself,—these are faults.

Then there are improbabilities, some of them quite wild, in the plot. The writer draws too often on convenient coincidences, and ignores both credibility and law in the violent doings of Heathcliffe. At the beginning of the century he could not have done some of the things she makes him do even in the wilds on the borders of Yorkshire and Lancashire.

And besides there is *the matter and tone of the story*. It is a harsh theme and the author spares us none of its harshness. She tells us that Wuthering Heights, by its mere name, is a place where the winds beat wildly and sob and wail. She sets the place on the edge of the moorland where the air is keen and the whole aspect of nature bare and bold, and through most of the year stern when it is not wild. She gives us a race that has lived there through generations, and the home and its morale fit the situation well. The race suits its environment, and that environment just then draws out its harshest qualities. Quarrels, curses, and blows are the most interesting occupation and a good part of the human intercourse of the place. Passion and perversity, pride and cruel self-will are its normal state. And all this the author grasps and relentlessly presents, and her style, which halts at times, on the whole conveys her theme with truth and power, in strong, keen phrases, that give the situations and her personæ in a graphic and masterly way.

Yet with all this even Charlotte hung back. "Its power," she says to Mr. Williams, in a letter of September, 1850, "fills me with admiration, but I am oppressed; the reader is scarcely ever permitted a taste of unalloyed pleasure, every beam of sunshine is poured down through

black bars of threatening cloud, every page is overcharged with a sort of moral electricity," and she adds, the writer "was unconscious of all this and nothing could make her conscious of it." Again, in her fine preface to the 1850 edition she says, "over much of the book there broods a horror of great darkness, in its storm-heated and electrical atmosphere we seem at times [and pretty often] to breathe lightning." And then, as you may recall, she goes on in an apologetic way to point to certain brighter and more human parts.

Now that is so, such is the quality of the book. It is tragic, in parts it is fierce, we may say, in its play of tragic passion, in its presentment of tragic truth. And so two things are often said, or felt when they are not said, "We do not like such tragedy," (Charlotte says that), and further "It is not life." Well, what then? Both positions are very arguable. Most of us don't like tragedy, and when the tragic misery is pure and full we turn away. R. L. Stevenson, in those pleasant letters of his, recently published, calls tragedy "the great-hearted lie," meaning that it never is the final interpretation of life. Well, in a sense it is not. "Gloomy tragedy" certainly is not. And that is why the tragedy of Webster and Ford is less true to life, and to the world order, than the tragedy of the master who wrote *King Lear* and *The Tempest*. And I ask, does not *King Lear* PLEASE after all its pain, as *The Tempest* reaches its comic issue after suffering and wrong well borne and nobly conquered. And as to this book of Emily Brontë, this tragic and tempestuous tale of *Wuthering Heights*, I have said it is by no means pleasant. Its persons are scarcely any of them pleasant to deal with, and would have been rather fearful to live with. Few of them have learned even the elements of self-control. A fierce and wrangling assertion of passion, courage, and personality is their normal mood, and some of them are almost odious. And yet not only is the book strong but the drift and moral of the book *please*, please that is in the high sense,—they satisfy our higher feelings and principles, and please as the severe order of the world pleases when we have caught its issues.

It is a work, let us allow, that can never be popular. It is a work that all too congenially expresses the temper and reflects the environment of its writer. It is not mellow and measured as the great works are. But it is a work of unquestionable depth, originality, and power, both in conception and execution. It is a work of strength and eminence in its kind and class.

And *what is that kind? what is that class?* It is said that it is not life or human nature. I have said that it is not life or man as the mellow masters present them. But it is true as well as powerful in its *kind*. Let us see what this means. There is, as you know, a rough division of dramatists and novelists into *Idealists* and *Realists*, and though both terms are hazily used and vaguely applied, we may allow a certain point and utility in them. The Realist is thought to draw and develop from observation and fact, the Idealist from his own passions and imagination. And it is said the one gives men and women, while the other gives types, ideals, principles, passions playing frankly, following their natures with free ardour, and carried to their full development. And Marlowe, it is said, is an Idealist, and Shakspeare a Realist—the Marlowe of *Tamburlaine* and *Faustus*—the Shakspeare of *Othello* and *Macbeth*.

Now I will not detain you to consider how far the distinction thus drawn is valid, accurate. There is point in it, we may allow, without admitting the distinction to be absolute, or the classification thus made to be complete. And you will find it difficult to show that *Hamlet* and *Lear* have not, as imaginative interpretations of character and life, large ideal elements. But let us admit such a distinction of minds and types of art, and then for what it is really worth we may say that *Wuthering Heights* would go with the Idealists, not with the great imaginative Realists. It takes, I will say, certain types, certain elements, working under certain conditions, and shows powerfully, thoughtfully, what will come of these working out their proper results, not as they would work out in the concrete world, where they would be modified by the reactions and relations of the world, but as they would work in a world apart and working to their height—which is to say that the conditions, plot, and persons are conceived ideally.

The writer in fact not only works imaginatively, but is again and again caught in the web and play of her imagination, as she presents her persons and their story. She takes her stand at the heart of the situation and seeks without other care to unfold it as she sees it in its whole truth. There is no false pity, no sentiment. Her aim is to see her problem and work it through as great Nature might. Unrestrained by convention, undisturbed by craving for effect, she works on with a simple and strict love of truth, and with imaginative freedom. In so working she gives many fine idealisms, those audacities of the imagination that get to the quick of her personæ in and through

the situations that bring out their qualities. There are, it seems to me, many instances of this tragic audacity and idealistic thoroughness of conception, instances that are on or close to the level of the finest work of this kind, though to many who cannot, or who will not enter this sphere of free imagination, they seem extravagant. The characters and the problem, I say, of *Wuthering Heights* are conceived, presented, and developed thus.

Now, taking the story thus imagined and developed let us try an appreciation of it on one or two lines, and first as to its problem. There let us say it is a study of the development and issues of evil, of anti-social passions, of hate and malice, working freely, backed and unfolded by exceptional strength and ability. This passion, generated perhaps by the initial wrong of birth, fostered and perpetuated and increased by a hundred circumstances and wrongs of early life, acting on a proud and capable nature, stings and impels, provokes and drives him into a calculated and thorough scheme of revenge, into a subtle, deliberate, sustained war on all who have wronged him, and on the system that enabled them to wrong and insult him, and he *wins*. He punishes and ruins all who have wronged and insulted him, one after the other, and stands master of the whole field, triumphant it seems, and yet only to find himself baffled, conquered at length by his own nature and by forces from within the system he seemed to have driven to his own issues. What the *meaning* of this is, we are to consider, but first of all let us turn to the story and see how this problem is there presented and wrought out by the genius of the writer, and in the terms she has chosen, in those persons through whose lives her study is worked out, understanding always of course that she is first aware of the persons and their play on each other, so to speak, and, after that, of the problem illustrated by their actions and development.

The hero and villain of the story is Heathcliffe, as wild a piece of untamed nature and unsocialised humanity as ever author presented. He is brought to Wuthering Heights by the then master of the place, who found him a suffering waif in the streets of a town to which he had paid a flying visit. The master takes a fancy to him, makes a favourite of him, and so does his daughter, Catherine Earnshaw. They become playmates, and then a passionate attachment gradually grows and intensifies between them. But the son hates Heathcliffe from the first. The elder Earnshaw dies, and Hindley comes home

from college to the family estate to be master, comes with a wife. Both keenly dislike Heathcliffe, and even persecute Catherine Earnshaw for her liking for him. Still they remain attached playmates until the girl is taken into Thrush Cross Grange, the home of the Lintons, to be nursed after an accident met with near the Grange. She returns after some weeks changed, at least superficially and conventionally. Hindley and his wife see and encourage this change, and degrade Heathcliffe more and more in her eyes. Edgar Linton has fallen in love with Catherine Earnshaw, she has some fancy for him, at least she cannot marry the outcast now. Heathcliffe overhears her declare this and leaves Wuthering Heights for the time, with bitter anger, and only to return for vengeance later, vengeance on Hindley Earnshaw and on Catherine Earnshaw, too, as he thinks, and on Edgar Linton for attracting and marrying her. During his absence, Earnshaw's wife dies, and a son Hareton is born. Catherine is married and lives in fair happiness at Thrush Cross Grange. After his wife's death, Hindley takes to reckless drinking, gambling, and brutality. Heathcliffe returns to use this for his own ends, until Hindley Earnshaw is ruined every way, degraded, brutalised, and every acre mortgaged to his deadly enemy. Yet they live a kind of demon life in Wuthering Heights together, Heathcliffe having the further satisfaction of degrading the son of the man he hates and is ruining. He has also found Catherine and revived her passion for himself, making her aware of the weakness of her husband. Her happiness is wrecked and then her life, in part through her sense of her mistake, in part through the headstrong devotion and resentment of Heathcliffe. She dies as a daughter is born to her. But prior to this and to punish Linton further, Heathcliffe has married his sister Isabella Linton. Heathcliffe never pretended any love for her, and ill-uses and insults her from the very hour of the marriage she has the fatuity to enter into. She summons courage and finds means to leave him. He never tries to find her; she spends the rest of her life far away from him. A son is born to her; she sends for her brother when dying to take charge of her son. He kindly takes a poor, sickly, spoiled, yet malicious thing known as Linton Heathcliffe, and brings him to Thrush Cross Grange, only to find his father claim him, because through him he may get hold of the Linton estates as well as the property of the Earnshaws, and he does. He draws or forces Catherine Linton, the daughter of his Catherine Earnshaw, into a marriage with

his wretched son, and that miserable creature lives only long enough to accomplish his father's double purpose with him.

But now that the field of his foes has been swept clear and his purposes apparently all achieved, what happens? Why, this, that his whole game turns to illusion and mere futility. He has done all and yet nothing, has punished all and yet now is lonely, restless. And Catherine Heathcliffe and Hareton Earnshaw fall in love with each other. Hareton, who worthily represents the old house and recovers himself through the love of Catherine Heathcliffe, and in these two the houses of Earnshaw and Linton triumph and win their rights again.

And what happens to Heathcliffe? This happens—that partly through weariness of his long game of hate, and partly through a sort of weird longing for love, the love of the one being who ever did love him, Catherine Earnshaw—Catherine Linton—he broods over her grave, over her spiritual presence with him, until he dies more than half mad, in the room that was her's in her girlhood.

That is a bald and brief outline of the plot, a rough sketch of the story through which the characters of Heathcliffe and the others are unfolded. It is easy to say that it is an impossible story. It is easy to start difficulties in the evolution of it. It is easy to find fault with the structure and arrangement of it. It is impossible to live without revulsion in Wuthering Heights, without pain even in Thrush Cross Grange. To be in the former were like being in Pandemonium or places not very far off.

But when we say all that, if we have read the story with any sympathy, with any insight, we are interested, impressed, we feel its strange force, its remorseless analysis, its powerful passion, its audacity and its ability, its fine ideality, its thrill of the power that creates.

To show it let us take certain parts of the story, certain points of æsthetic criticism, and then let me throw out the ethical laws and ideas on which the story as a study of life is set.

First then, as to the more striking parts of the story. Most of us would admit that the opening of the story is a little clumsy, and that so far as the narrative goes the machinery is never got into perfect order. I suppose that is part of what her sister meant when she spoke apologetically of "simple tools" and "a rude chisel." And yet in certain ways those opening chapters are framed to rouse curiosity in such a story as she has to tell. Lock-

wood's dreams, Heathcliffe's strange passion, and those broken relics and memories of a tragic past, and that picture of Wuthering Heights and its dwellers—everyone's hand and temper against every other person in it—moves us, if it also somewhat repels us. And there is the true touch of the supernatural in the horror (woven out of those haunting memories of the place, and the tapping of a fir branch) with which Lockwood cries out to the one man most deeply interested in the whole story, "If the little fiend had got in at the window, she would probably have strangled me. She must have been a changeling, wicked little soul. She told me she had been walking the earth these twenty years, a just punishment for her mortal sins, no doubt." And that to Heathcliffe, for whom the place and its memories are the heart of all his days! You don't wonder that the stranger's curiosity is piqued or that he listens with growing interest to Nelly Dean's strange wild story, with that vivid background of the actual Wuthering Heights set for it all. A "cuckoo's story," the housekeeper calls it, and such it is, if there ever was such a story.

And Heathcliffe is the very genius and hero proper to such a story! From the first moment of his appearance he is the centre of angry disappointments and malignant passions, and he never ceases to be so until the strange calm of the close—that calm with a heart of wild restlessness. He suffers much, but as his pluck is indomitable, so his resource is exhaustless. Hindley thrashes him and he can bear it, with ready recovery of himself, because he knows he can beat them all yet, and he sticks at nothing, as nothing daunts him. He has no morality. Proud, with a pride that is self-assertion not self-respect, cold on the surface, though with a core of consuming passion, sullen and evil, yet not small, and free or nearly so from the grosser passions. He is no vulgar villain, a woman's villain you may possibly call him, but drawn largely, boldly, with astonishing force often. Charlotte speaks of the granite block on a solitary moor, cut to the shape of a head, savage, dark and sinister, and of a figure colossal, terrible, goblin-like, that remains half statue, half rock. But Charlotte is less than just there. The conception, I said, is ideal, and it is evolved under ideal conditions. It is too simply compounded; it is isolated for development; but the conception is grasped and presented more fully than Charlotte allows.

And I said Heathcliffe is no vulgar villain. He suffers wrong and he will pay it back with interest. He has no care

for the rights of others; others have never cared for his rights or seen that he has any. Like Edmund in *Lear* his very position in the world and its whole bearing to him are a daily wrong. He owes it only hate, and he pays that royally. His life is a long battle against it.

And yet this nature, cruel, hard, and keen as steel, living only for vengeance, and evincing his power by his success in winning it, cut off every way it would seem from humanity, this nature has something deeper, more lasting, and more precious to it than hate or retaliation, and that is a strange, imperious, passionate love. His love for Catherine Earnshaw is the romance of his life, the romance of the book, as the wrong she did him by despising him for a time was the worst suffering of his life, and drove him to his worst deeds. In not a few scenes this passion is presented with extraordinary force. Keen, hungry, despotic, cruel, exacting, but from the quick, not from the senses or any calculations. You recall the last scene with Catherine, when the two are together for a brief space, knowing it to be the last, and when he pours out his whole passion, edged with irony and sense of wrong,—Catherine faded, spent, but beautiful, fascinating as ever—Heathcliffe struggling between a passionate love and a passionate revolt, cruel and tender in one molten mood of hopeless love. What elemental power of the great poets is in it! And you recall the wild scene, years after, at her grave. Madness is then of course setting in, and the madness deepens, the heart and spring of it his passionate need for the only human being he ever cared for, to break the sheer loneliness of life for him. She haunts his life; he wishes her to haunt his life. All places that he cares for are associated with her. She becomes at length the only fact of his life. His love turns to monomania, he sees and feels only her, and the strong man breaks down under the strain, and is driven whither she has gone.

And beside this strange figure, matching, complementing it, is the figure of Catherine Earnshaw, to which less than justice has been done, for surely as girl and woman she is fascinating to the romantic imagination, though again ideal. She has the loveliness and wildness of the moorland, its keen air, its changefulness under the winds that sweep it, the skies that stretch over it, and yet with the constancy of the moorland too, and of deep, simple, natural natures, shall we say? Gay, mischievous, proud, keen and fierce, and bold, and yet touched with a certain love of finery and of the world, her great mistake that she

did not know herself enough and married Linton. Her nature slept for a time, but the merciless devotion of Heathcliffe woke it up, made her aware that her heart was elsewhere, her destiny elsewhere, and took the life out of her life. The strain of passion, the cruel friction of her life, broke her more delicate nature down. She died in giving birth to that other Catherine who is the paler and yet sweeter charm of the last part of the tragedy.

There are scenes in which this nature is powerfully drawn, *e.g.*, when she talks to Nelly Dean of her marriage with Linton and gives us glimpses into her soul. "Your brother will be pleased, you will be happy, Edgar loves you, all seems smooth and easy. What is the difficulty? Where the obstacle?" asks Nelly Dean. "Here and here," said Catherine, striking her forehead and her breast, "here and here, or wherever the soul may be, in my soul and heart I am convinced I am wrong." "That's strange," says Nelly Dean. "Its my secret, I'll explain it, at least I'll give you a feeling of how I feel." Then, having told how she had had dreams that had gone through her mind like wine through water, changing her ideas, altering the tone and colour of her mind, when a lack of sympathy on the part of Nelly Dean checks her explanation, she can only tell that somehow she is such that if she were in heaven she would be miserable, and that how once she dreamt she was in heaven, and broke her heart with weeping to get back to earth, and how being thrown out she sobbed with joy to find herself again on the heath, behind the Heights. Such is her nature, such her feeling towards her lovers! Marriage with Linton seems a kind of heaven. But Heathcliffe is herself—and yet she feels she could not marry him now. The pity of it!

There are, too, those scenes in which she loses Heathcliffe, and seeks him, wild, disconsolate, reckless as Lear, on the heath exposed to the pitiless storm, soaked to the skin, and then in that state lies the night through on the settle, to wake in the delirium of fever.

And there are scenes of wild temper at the Grange, when the smooth surface is broken through, and the volcanic forces of her nature come up to shatter that quiet home, to startle that mild husband and leave him desolate.

The tragic audacity and force of the conception is indeed shown at many points, as we have said, though we can well understand the difficulty many readers have to enter into the freedom and pleasure of the artist. Take a few examples, with something of the force of the Elizabethans.

On p. 49 of Popular Edition, 1875, or 1879, we have this:—

"I am trying to settle how I shall pay Hindley back, I don't care how long I wait, if I can only do it at last."

"For shame, Heathcliffe," said I, "It is for God to punish wicked people; we should forgive."

"No, God won't have the satisfaction that I shall," he returned, "I only wish I knew the best way."

A similar or even greater audacity is put in the mouth of Hindley Earnshaw on p. 62, measuring there also the surrender of the author to the free energy of creation.

Then this account of Heathcliffe with Catherine, on p. 132, when he feared she must die: "'Oh, Cathy! Oh, my life! how can I bear it?' And now he stared at her so earnestly that I thought the very intensity of his gaze would bring tears into his eyes, but they burned with anguish, they did not melt."

Or, take the weird pages that give the doings of Heathcliffe at the grave, the night after Catherine's burial, pp. 240-242. Snow had fallen. It was bleak as winter, and solitary all round, and she was deep in the earth. But he would see her face, and have her in his arms again. And he dug till he touched her coffin and was on the point of attaining his object, when the spirit of the dead seemed to come and be not under him but on the earth, and he was consoled and gave up his labour, and was led home by her and was sure she was with him, and yet could not for all his yearning *see* her.

Certain passages also that deal with Catherine have the same vividness and grasp. I have referred to one of these (cf. pp. 65-67). I will refer to another that has, as it seems to me, fine imaginative quality. It is that part of the story where, in her feverish excitement, Catherine is tearing the pillow with her teeth, pulling the feathers from the rents she has made, and ranging them in their different species (pp. 101-2). "That's a turkey's," she murmured; "and this is a wild duck's; and this is a pigeon's. They put pigeon's feathers in the pillows—no wonder I could not die! And here is a moor-cock's; and this—I should know it among a thousand—it's a lapwing's. Bonny bird, wheeling over our heads in the middle of the moor. It wanted to get to its nest, for the clouds had touched the swells, and it felt rain coming. This feather was picked up from the heath, the bird was not shot; we saw its nest in the winter full of little skeletons. Heathcliffe set a trap over it and the old ones dare not come. I made him promise he'd never shoot a lapwing after that, and he

didn't. Yes, here are more! Did he shoot my lapwings, Nelly? Are they red, any of them? Let me look."

There is too that last wild scene with Heathcliffe already alluded to. If one go by the decencies of even measurably controlled lives that must be objected to. Yet surely it fits the two, and fills the cup of tragic misery wrought by such lives and their deeds. These scenes are not pleasant, any more than certain other great tragic scenes are pleasant. They are however from the core of her persons and quick with vital truth as well as passion.

Some, I am aware, invincibly regard Heathcliffe as a mere ruffian, not only unfit for the imagination of such a woman as Emily Brontë, but melodramatic if not morbid. Still your "ruffian" may be "studied," and I have suggested his interest and his uses, his "heart and nerves," (cf. pp. 132-133, 139-140). But are there not pages of mere brutality (cf. pp. 126-128)? Is not his marriage a piece of such brutality? and other relations of his in the tale? Is not his conduct to Catherine in her last days of this sort? It may be so, and I do not stop to "argue" these points, perhaps they are imperfectly open to argument. My point now is that on the whole the characters of Catherine and Heathcliffe, and their singular yet touching relation to each other, are vigorously and rightly imagined and set forth.

The conception and figure of the second Catherine, Linton and Earnshaw, is also well given, and the figure of Hareton Earnshaw is interesting and fairly drawn, both of them saved by love and lifted at length out of the world of hate and evil into which they are born. The description of this Catherine in the story is just and happy (vide pp. 157-158). "She soon grew like a larch. She was the most winning thing that ever brought sunshine into a desolate house, a real beauty in face, with the Earnshaws' handsome dark eyes, but the Lintons' fair skin and small features, and yellow curling hair. Her spirit was high, though not rough, and qualified by a heart sensitive and lively to excess in its affections. That capacity for intense attachments reminded one of her mother, still she did not resemble her, for she could be soft and mild as a dove, and she had a gentle voice and a pensive expression; her anger was never furious, her love never fierce, it was deep and tender. She had, however, faults to foil her gifts. A propensity to be saucy was one, and a perverse will . . ." and a certain passionate turn, "if her father reproved her, it was a heart-breaking business;" as a scholar she was "quick and eager to learn."

So it was, we can believe. The fairer and gentler things, and the better parts of the first Catherine appear in the second, and the kinder virtues of the Earnshaws, with their manly parts too, come in Hareton. The figure of Joseph, though not exactly one of the pleasantest of the book, is certainly one of its successes. It is a harsh figure, a stern delineation, some hold it; a type of a certain creed and form of religion, without morality but with plenty of mother-wit of the most caustic sort, also plenty of the hard egotism that gathers the promises for self, and is free with the curses for others and yet is loyal to the family it has served in its way for years. Of such folks, on both sides of them, Yorkshire has had its share.

And now to turn to the other side I named, to turn to the question, What is the moral ground of all this? Is it really set on moral truth, on laws of the soul? I must say as regards that, that it seems to me that *Wuthering Heights* is strong and sound, I cannot say mellow or sufficient on this side of it. What is it I mean? This is what I mean. Strange, exaggerated, as to some of its readers it has seemed, the elements and evolution of *Wuthering Heights* are fairly set on laws of the soul, within the moral sphere.

You have seen the problem as regards Heathcliffe and its development. I have implied that it is in part the problem of Edmund in *Lear*. A proud, able man, shut out by accident of birth, by the usage of society, and by the treatment of others, from honourable life and human rights, sets himself against society, and single-handed, alone, beats the part of society he is concerned with, triumphs all round cruelly, and desolates his world, his own life being desolate. They have forced him to it, being what he was and where he was, and he punishes them even to his contentment, only to find his triumph a defeat, only to realise that no life can be spent for that, only to feel a strange futility, a deep void, an awful loneliness, a fatal, awful separation from human fellowship, which drives him madly upon his deep, sad love for Catherine Earnshaw, and never lets him rest until he lies beside her, mixing his dust with hers, and desperately touching her heart in the grave. And that this is no moral of my drawing you can test if you look at p. 269 of the 1879 edition. "It is a poor conclusion, is it not?" he observed, having brooded a while on the scene he had just witnessed. "An absurd termination to my violent exertions? I got levers and mattocks to demolish the two houses, and train myself to be capable of working like Hercules, and when everything is ready and in my

power, I find the will to lift a slate off either roof has vanished! My old enemies have not beaten me; now would be the precise time to revenge myself on their representatives: I could do it; and none could hinder me. But where is the use? I don't care for striking; I can't take the trouble to raise my hand. . . . I have lost the faculty of enjoying their destruction."

I said that Heathcliffe has *no morality*, and through the larger part of this story he has not, nor could he have, for *morality* is essentially and actively *sociality*, and this man *felt no social ties*. But you see that even such natures *are held by morality*. Not even such a man can live for himself alone, even for him the final question comes, what good? for what end? and what is there after all your evil achievement? And the answer even in his case cannot be simply to please myself. And if one should say, "This is so in the tale. It is scarcely so in life and is but a woman's fancy." It is fair to say that the inventions of genius are facts of nature, and to point how Edmund, in *Lear*, as drawn by the great master, sought love, and was held at length by the human bonds.

And it closely follows from this study, as from the master's study of Edmund in *Lear*, that our villains are not made by any sheer and perverse delight in evil, as is often superficially assumed by a certain kind of moralist and theologian. I am not going to say that there is no such fact as delight in evil, though I rather think you will seldom find it, you will scarcely find it pure and simple. Anyhow, nearly always your villain is made by birth and circumstances, by perverse and wrong relations to society, and by the wrongs of society. In all his plays, Shakspeare has only Iago, and he suggests some excuse for and some good in Iago, and surely that is a case of critical significance on the point before us.

And there is a further truth and law fairly if not adequately realised in *Wuthering Heights* and its moral evolution, that is the in these days so much talked of *law of heredity*; our moral characters and deeds, the quality and drift of our lives, do not begin or end with ourselves. Vital results work on and on, through the generations of life, of lives. We enter into the lives of others, the life of humanity. We pass on not only the torch, but the consequences and qualities of life. And this law of moral causation—as a law of conduct and of souls is thoughtfully seen and boldly faced by the young writer. Edgar and Catherine Linton have a daughter, Hindley Earnshaw and his wife have a son,

Heathcliffe and Isabella Linton in their wretched and loveless marriage have a son, and these events are part of the tragedy of *Wuthering Heights*, for its author fairly portrays what must ensue,—tragically in the case of Linton Heathcliffe, painfully for a long time in that of Hindley Earnshaw, mildly in the case of Catherine Linton, terribly of course in the case of Heathcliffe, who has plainly come of a wild stock. All these she conceives as deeply modified by the lives and by the history behind them.

But she does not make the law of heredity an iron despot, working within harsh and narrow areas only, rather she felt it, if she did not conceive it broadly, and if austerely still generously. For you see, out of the weakness of the Lintons and the evil of Wuthering Heights come these two lovers to bring in the milder and better day of another generation.

And connected with this austere yet kindly sense of the coherence of life and of lives is another point felt by readers and partly indicated by one critic. The close of the book seems to show on the author's part a sense of how exactly yet how genially in the great course of the years Nature takes her own laws, how the errors are adjusted, the wrongs healed, the tragedy of men's egoisms buried in peace, while about all the trouble of life and outlasting it all is Nature's own quiet greatness and beauty. You know what I refer to, the last scenes, and the closing pages of this strange story. Let me quote so as to give my points. "We buried him as he wished" [by the side of Catherine and near Edgar Linton]. . . . "We [two only] stayed to see it covered, Hareton, with streaming face, dug green sods, and laid them over the brown mould himself: now it is as smooth and green" [as the other graves]. . . . "I hope its tenant sleeps as soundly." . . . "The country folks [soon began to say] Heathcliffe walks [and another with him—"a woman."] . . . "But," Nelly said "No! Mr. Lockwood the dead are at peace." . . . [And one evening, sometime after, visiting the kirk] "I lingered round their graves, under that benign sky: watched the moths fluttering among the heath, and the harebells, listened to the soft wind breathing through the grass, and wondered how any could ever imagine unquiet slumbers for the sleepers in that quiet earth."

It has always been a question with the critics and with thoughtful readers since this remarkable book was published: *How did the book arise? How could Emily Brontë have done it?*

Now this inquiry is first of all a question as to the sources of the culture, and even of the gifts and quality of mind of these women, and then it is a question as to the form and quality of their work. It is in part, too, a question as to all the sisters, and in part a question as to each, at least in the cases of Charlotte and Emily, for there are important differences between them. How were they able with their experience to do the work they did? And why has their work the qualities and the power that it has? Criticism has scarcely said its "last word" on this part of your subject. It is too large to deal with now, but though we have already touched parts of it in Emily's case, it may be well at least to outline the larger answer, and then to glance at the question of Brontë origins as regards the work of Emily more particularly.

The Celtic ancestry of the Brontës certainly had to do with their gifts and qualities, as women and as writers. Their sensibility, their fire, their passion, their romantic temper, their melancholy, are from the Celtic basis of their natures and a part of their genius.

Their Northern home, their Yorkshire environment and training, had, as we all see, much to do with their qualities as women, and with the matter and quality of their writings. Not only the moors above Haworth, their form, and colour, and spirit, but the Yorkshire folk, their traditions, their temper of life, their principles and types of character, and the particular social phase through which Northern English society was passing between the "twenties" and the "fifties" of this century, enter into it.

Their Puritan ethics, their evangelical creed and seriousness, and the view and colour of life that in coherent and sincere natures come of these, surely give in part the matter of the writings and the spirit of the writers. It is certainly so in the case of Charlotte. The strength and the limits of the writer of *Jane Eyre* and *Villette*, the quality and it must be said the defects of her body of thought, are in part thus explained. Are certain things in Emily's writings, things which Charlotte it seems could not understand, accounted for by implicit reaction from the ethics and creed in which they were nurtured and to which they were expected to conform?

Their literature, of course, is a good part of the answer to our question, though in literary studies it is easy to make too much of this. In their quiet home, they were eager readers of the best things they could get, and had the genius to respond to those things as they found them.

And we know what their favourite literature was. The elder and newer romantic literature of our own country, certain French romantic writers, and to some rather indefinite extent, certain German writers of the modern romantic movement—these were the writers they chiefly read and loved, and consciously or unconsciously shaped interest and utterance by, at the time when mind and style were being formed. It is perhaps scarcely necessary to enumerate the writers just referred to, Mrs. Gaskell and others have given them. But it may be well to add here to what has been above said of Emily that Charlotte came much more than Emily under the influence of certain French writers, Sand, Hugo, and others. It is said, though I cannot ascertain very clearly the evidence for it, that Emily fell more under the influence of certain German writers, Tieck and some others of the earlier romantic school. It seems to me the fact that Emily's romantic sympathy is freer and fuller than Charlotte's, her romantic instinct and power deeper, as her mind had a keener fire and a quicker passion, and a freer play in the sphere of art and for creative work.

And while setting forth thus briefly these points on the question of sources, we would not forget, though in a certain kind of analysis it seems easy to forget, that the last springs of genius lie deeper than culture, circumstance, or race, in a certain native power, a certain fineness or wealth or force of mind. It is, we suppose, in view of this that certain readers resent all attempts to give an account of sources and prefer to regard every original writer as beyond explanation, hiding—not merely at the heart of them, but in their whole character and work—a secret no search can clear up. To such readers, a writer like Emily Brontë, reserved, elusive, dying young, and leaving little, seems peculiarly a riddle. For her own set even, she was something not quite understood. Perhaps the points we have touched, and the point of view taken, throw some light on a difficult personality and a rare mind.

There is still that other part of our problem of Brontë origins, the problem of the sources of *Wuthering Heights*. Certain recent Brontë literature was by some I suppose thought to have given a full and final answer to that question. Dr. Wright's book on *The Brontës in Ireland* took a certain portion of the world of readers, and critics too, by storm, and was taken to have set forth the real sources of Emily's singular story.

Of the method and value of the book, what is to be said? Has Dr. Wright proved his case? Very distinctly

and very deliberately it seems to me, that the method of the book is vicious and its value slight. I can't now go into it, certainly not into the question discussed by Mr. Angus Mackay in his book on *The Brontës: Fact and Fiction*. I will only touch it so far as it bears upon our present subject, though indeed the main portion even, of Dr. Wright's argument or case, turns on *Wuthering Heights* and the work of Emily. He tries, as you are aware, to show that the kernel of the story was from Ireland, and arose in the life of one of the most remarkable of the Brontës. I am not convinced; I must even hold that Dr. Wright's whole theory can be refuted from his own book, and from true criticism of the writings of Emily.

How does it stand? Briefly, it seems to me to stand thus: Dr. Wright's stories hang very loosely together, at times fall into contradiction, and even if in themselves they were coherent and credible they are not much to the point. They really explain nothing, or nothing material, and these stories were not (whether true or otherwise) known to the Brontë sisters, not it seems to Patrick Brontë. The fact is, as I take it, Dr. Wright has gathered, without criticism, as many stories as he could, and spun them together very credulously. He is a romancist, not a historian, and my distinct impression is that the novels of these sisters have got mixed in Dr. Wright's *yarns* with the stories he picked up in Ireland. I will put it that the Yorkshire Brontës and their imaginations stand accountable for a good deal that happened to the Brontës in Ireland long ere they were born. That also is a way in which legends have grown and grow.

And then it is open to Dr. Wright to say, "If you refuse my account of the origin of the work of Emily Brontë more particularly, what account do you give?" Let me say, in the first place, that these gentlemen scarcely understand the way in which imagination works, its laws of invention. They think it seems that unless *all* is given you cannot explain the elements and texture of a story. But it is just the function of imagination to create and invent, and given simple suggestions, elements, it does not merely work them up mechanically, it vivifies and transforms them, giving more and better than it got.

And where then do I take it those elements were to be found? Here in Yorkshire, yonder in Haworth, and in the home of the Brontës I regret to say. Too much may have been made of the career of Branwell as one source, but there is no doubt it did contribute forcibly. That dark deteriora-

tion of their brother, his strange love affair, and his surrender of himself to evil and self-will, all this must have been the revelation of new powers of evil to his sisters, especially to Emily. And the scenery, the external as well as the human nature, of *Wuthering Heights* is definitely Yorkshire, the atmosphere Yorkshire, the hard force, the dogged will, the fierce self-assertion, the rugged rebellion against life, the tenacious assertion of self through evil and pain even, that is Yorkshire.

Charlotte herself—long before Dr. Wright had dealt in his peculiar fashion with the sources of *Wuthering Heights* and the origin of its conceptions—Charlotte herself had dealt with the question in her brief Memoir of her sister, and her account in substance was that the material of which the book was fashioned was got largely from the life around her and from her own temperament, her own mind and character She did not of course venture to touch the family tragedy and the bearing of that on the ethical quality of *Wuthering Heights*. And I repeat, *that is the solution* of what I have called *the Brontë problem, which criticism still offers and approves*.

I can remember very well my first visit to the home of the Brontës, one autumn day, some twenty years ago now, and the impressions I then took. It was a grey day, with winds sweeping over the moors and through the few trees about the vicarage. The vicarage itself grey and bare, the graveyard in front, the old church at the side, the moors behind, the bare heights all round, and the harsh outlines of the village, it looked and felt a strong and stern scene. I had just been reading *Villette* and *Wuthering Heights* with a conviction, then new but distinct, that they were the strongest and most remarkable books of these two remarkable women. And it seemed to me then that every circumstance about me went to explain the last book I had been reading. It seems more definitely so now. The home, the village, the villagers, known from a distance rather and in their fierce and tragic traits, as Charlotte says, the larger houses about, built out of the moorland so to say all seem to fit that book. Life there must have seemed strangely grim. In large measure it must have seemed a harsh, perverse world; pain, roughness, blunt words, self-will, vice, temper, "conquered good and conquering ill," its elements and events. The author did not long for gentleness we may believe, but for reason, for right, for just humanities she did long, and where were they? To be evolved possibly some day, but far from being so then and

there, as it seemed. In view of this imaginative woman, sombre and severe herself, her memory stored, we have said, with tragic and terrible facts of the life near her, with knowledge of dogged, relentless, implacable natures, like moorland whinstone, yet capable of strong affections as of fixed resolutions, it does not seem difficult to account for the wild story and the strange picture of life she has given us.

And Emily herself had, we can see, a too emphatic sympathy with the strong, harsh side of the nature and human nature about her. We are told that Shirley Keeldar is Emily Brontë under more genial circumstances, and since Charlotte has said this, it must be taken as in some measure true, probable. But what might have been under other circumstances was not, and the woman we know is other than Shirley Keeldar, a courageous, passionate, proud, strong-willed, strong-minded, austere woman, affectionate and faithful of heart, relentless towards weakness, severe with herself, thinking her own thoughts, and able to act with a decision and pluck few women show, bearing her sorrows firmly, and dying (like a Norse warrior) on her feet—invincible in will to the last!

And *her creed*, we may say, fits—full of quick and vigorous reaction against convention, make-believe, stupidity, and every sort of cant. Her temper befits her environment, and reacts upon and masters her experience. She is no easy optimist, hardly an optimist it may seem at all. Her theory of things has the colour of the moors, the texture of life about her. Nature and man are harsh. There is much evil in the world, and men use their stubborn freedom to follow it, harden their wills to the far end of it, and neither bend nor break. But as on the moors there are fair, almost tender spots, and moments of a strange beauty, so in these strong, harsh evil natures, there are wells of passion, and powers of devotion, and capacities of good, unsuspected and it may be little valued by the sentimental, the conventional, but yet of essential value in the sum and final account of life. Life is a severe master and neither asks nor gives much happiness, it would seem, yet trains and punishes, cleanses and rewards on its own terms, and in its own way, and though the last secret of the issues of the process be kept from us so far, yet we may trust the issue, for we are a part of the eternal universe, and nothing can defraud us of our part in its life, or of our share in its good.

This was the woman, surely, and this the creed, to imagine and fashion *Wuthering Heights*.

NOTE.—It may be matter of interest, from the point of view of literary history, and for use of readers, to add here a list of the more valuable and significant appreciations of the work and genius of Emily Brontë. The list is short. It begins with Sydney Dobell's article in *Palladium* for 1851. It includes Charlotte's *Notice* above referred to; Arnold's *Haworth Churchyard* (one of his fine elegiac poems); *Emily Brontë* (life and criticism in *Eminent Women* series), by A. M. F. Robinson; the brief Essay on *Emily Brontë*, by A. C. Swinburne (now to be found in his *Miscellanies*). Mr. C. K. Shorter's chapter on "Emily Brontë," in his *Charlotte Brontë and her Circle*, gives three letters of Emily's, and some letters about her, that throw a little light on her life and character. But the fact that Mr. Shorter's sympathy and industry brought only these, suggests that we have now had what there is. Since the above study was written, Mrs. Ward's *Introduction* to *Wuthering Heights* has been issued in the "Haworth" edition of the novels.

BRONTË SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS.

PART XII.

TRANSACTIONS:

CONTAINING

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

AT BRIGHOUSE,

An Address delivered to the Society,

AND AN

Article reprinted from the British Association Handbook, 1900.

PRINTED FOR THE SOCIETY BY
M. FIELD AND SONS, SOUTHGATE, BRADFORD.

MAY, 1901.

NOTE.

The Council of the Brontë Society wish it to be understood that the Authors of the various Articles printed in the "Transactions" are alone responsible for the opinions expressed.

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SEVENTH

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE BRONTË SOCIETY.

The Meeting was held at Brighouse, on Saturday, March 30th, 1901. The date originally fixed, January 26th, was abandoned on account of the death of Queen Victoria.

The Annual Business Meeting of the Society was held in the afternoon (by the kind permission of the Mayor) in the Council Chamber, at the Municipal Buildings, and was presided over by Mr. J. F. Greenwood, of Haworth (retiring chairman of the Council). About fifty ladies and gentlemen were present from all parts of the West Riding and the attendance would undoubtedly have been larger had more favourable conditions of weather prevailed. The Chairman was supported by Mr. W. W. Yates, Dewsbury (newly-elected chairman), Mr. J. J. Stead, Heckmondwike (treasurer), Mr. W. T. Field, Bradford (honorary secretary), Mr. W. Taylor and Mr. Jonathan Caldwell (Brighouse), members of the Council, who had had in hand the arrangements for the gathering, and who accorded to the members from other districts a hearty and cordial welcome to Brighouse.

The Honorary Secretary, Mr. W. T. Field, read the Seventh Annual Report, and Mr. J. J. Stead, the Honorary Treasurer, submitted his Balance Sheet.

The Chairman said it was his pleasant duty, for the third time in succession, to move the adoption of the report and balance sheet. He was glad to say that at the conclusion of that triennium, when he was ceasing to hold office as chairman of the Council, the affairs of the Society were in such a prosperous condition. Their membership, as was stated in the report, now numbered 331, and he thought he was justified in saying that this was the high water mark of the Society, so far as its membership was concerned. They could not claim that their prosperity had advanced by leaps and bounds, but they might say, to use another quotation, that they went on without haste and yet without rest. The finances of the society were in a fairly good condition, for they finished the financial year with a larger balance in hand than they had at the beginning. He would like to see their position in this respect even stronger still, because he believed that as a society they would shortly have to face the expenses of incorporation, which would give the society a form of legal status it

did not possess at the present time. Unfortunately the process to be gone through in securing this was somewhat expensive, and he understood would cost about £40. The gifts to the museum had not been very numerous during the year, but some of them had been very valuable, especially the collection of Autograph Letters by Charlotte Brontë presented by Mr. Thomas J. Wise, including the two last letters which Charlotte Brontë ever wrote, and which were written in pencil on her death-bed. The society had visited each year places of interest associated with the Brontës, and his only regret was that the number of such places of interest available to the society was becoming somewhat limited; and he did not see any alternative in the future but beginning again and going the round over once more. The year had been specially marked by the number of educational and scientific bodies who had visited the museum. It had been his duty, in collaboration with Mr. Butler Wood, to explain the various objects in the museum, and also to point out the places of interest in the church and the village. The pleasure of doing this was somewhat interesting, though he was bound to say that it palled in course of time. In connection with the visit of the British Association to Bradford an excursion was made to Haworth, for which event he had the pleasure of preparing a small handbook relating to the village, the Brontës and the museum. In that handbook he inserted a number of very interesting extracts from the parish registers, the extracts dating back as far as 200 or 250 years ago. The chairman closed his address by moving the adoption of the report and balance sheet.

Mr. Wm. Taylor (Brighouse) seconded the motion, which was passed.

Mr. W. W. Yates and Mr. J. J. Stead suggested that the Haworth handbook to which the chairman had referred be included in the "Transactions" of the Society, a suggestion which was favourably received.

Mr. Thomas Ashworth (Todmorden) moved, and Mr. Hartley seconded, the re-election of the officers of the Society, which was unanimously passed.

Miss Cockshott (Oakworth) moved a vote of thanks to the Mayor and Corporation for the use of the Council Chamber.

This was seconded by Mrs. C. E. Sugden (Ryshworth Hall, Bingley), and cordially passed.

Mr. Caldwell replied to the vote, expressing the regret which Ald. Clay (the Mayor) felt at not being able to personally welcome the members of the Brontë Society to Brighouse. He could assure them that they were all heartily welcome that afternoon.

A vote of thanks to Mr. Greenwood for presiding brought the proceedings to a close.

PUBLIC MEETING.

A large audience assembled in the Town Hall in the evening, under the presidency of Mr. Algernon F. Firth, J.P., who was supported by Mr. R. B. Haldane, K.C., M.P., and members of the Council of the Brontë Society.

Mr. Field read a letter from Mr. C. P. Trevelyan, M.P., regretting his inability to be present as member of Parliament for the district to welcome them to Brighouse. He was glad that such a society was in existence to keep fresh the traditions of the greatest of our women novelists. "The greatest test," he wrote "of literary perfection is that an author's work should be read aloud without a feeling on the part of the hearers of any superfluity or dulness. I know no writer whose every sentence stands this test as absolutely as Charlotte Brontë. This, as one of the merits of her great work, has always struck me."

The Chairman expressed regret that owing to the posponement of the meeting, the society was deprived of the presence of Sir Geo. J. Armytage, Bart., who would have been an ideal chairman at a meeting of this kind. They welcomed very warmly the members of the Brontë Society, and only regretted that owing to the inclement character of the weather the audience was not larger. Yorkshiremen, of all English speaking people, ought to revere and cherish the memory of the wonderful Brontë family, and particularly in that district should they take an interest in the Brontës because they were living almost in the scene of their novels, many of which were familiar to most of them. It was not so much the novels as the life and character of the writers which they esteemed so highly. It was not for him to speak about Charlotte Brontë or the Brontë family. Mr. Haldane was there to do that. He only wished to say how warmly they in Brighouse cherished the memory of the sisters, and recognised how they nerved one for the struggle of

existence by the bright example set in that wild moorland parish, by the wonderful strength and courage with which they faced dangers and sorrow. They were not the only people who cherished the memory of those sisters. It was a cause for satisfaction to see distinguished Scotchmen revering their memory, and an equal satisfaction to note the number of Americans who visited Haworth every year. From the other side of the Atlantic Americans came across, seeking information about their doings. The stained glass window erected in Haworth Church by an American citizen in honour of Charlotte Brontë was a proof of the regard felt for her memory. His chief duty that night was to introduce to them Mr. Haldane. They all knew his name and were familiar with the work he was doing in legal circles and in Parliament. When a man of his position in politics and law was willing to come from London to pay a tribute of respect to the Brontës, they had reason to be proud of them, and cherish their memory even more than before. They knew how Charlotte Brontë was struck with Scotch people, and he hoped that night they would hear what one distinguished Scotchman thought of Charlotte Brontë. Whatever he might say, the fact of his presence was a proof of the increasing regard in which she was held by all classes of her fellow-countrymen.

Mr. Haldane then gave an address on "Emily Brontë's place in literature" which was highly appreciated by the audience.

Mr. J. J. Stead, the Hon. Treasurer, followed with an interesting exhibition of lantern slides illustrative of the scenes and characters of the Brontë novels, and the meeting was closed with votes of thanks to Mr. Haldane and the chairman.

EMILY BRONTË'S PLACE IN LITERATURE.

An Address delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Brontë Society by Mr. R. B. Haldane, K.C., M.P., at Brighouse, on March 30th, 1901.

Mr. Haldane said:—

I have been asked to address this meeting on the subject of the Brontës.

Many more capable than myself could have been found for the task. The sole qualification I possess is that I have lived in their memory and have loved it. I

will not, speaking in this part of Yorkshire, attempt to recall to the minds of my audience the circumstances amid which the Brontës lived. That would, indeed, be to carry coals to Newcastle, and, moreover, it was only last Sunday that I managed, for the first time, to see Haworth. I found what one very rarely finds—just what I expected and what I had hoped. I will not try to speak of the whole of the members of the family. I dismiss out of consideration that venerable figure—the father—of whom the world knows so much from his daughters and from contemporary legend ; I pass by also that estimable, hard-working, gentle, tender sister, Anne ; and say nothing of the career of that life which had in it the touch of genius, but which was blighted—Branwell Brontë.

I want to take the course which is most natural to myself, because in doing that I shall come least short in trying to put my ideas before this meeting. I wish to speak of the two sisters—"the twin sisters of genius" they have been called,—Charlotte and Emily Brontë.

When one comes near a subject such as this, when one tries to form an estimate of the work of those two women who have so profoundly impressed themselves upon the literature of our time, one is full of the consciousness of the magnitude of the task. Charlotte and Emily Brontë do not belong merely to Yorkshire ; they belong to England, they belong to our Empire ; they are among the precious heritages of our civilisation. They have spoken in a way that is abiding, in a way that statesmen cannot speak, and that has made their work belong to what, so far as time is concerned, would seem to be imperishable. And when we try to estimate them as they were, what one feels first of all is the necessity of getting some standard, some idea of how best we are to test and judge that work. I want to try and estimate them relatively to one another, to bring out what to me seems to be that which marks off the one sister from the other.

But what is the standard to be applied in each case? Fortunately, there has been a great deal of agreement as to what is the meaning of art, and what is the real standard of excellence in it. The philosophers have been singularly at one from the days of Plato down to our own times on this point. It is quite true that the philosophers, like the politicians, are constantly at loggerheads. But when you come to look into their differences it sometimes turns out that the differences are less between measures than

between men, and, therefore, when we eliminate the differences of language and the difference of standpoint, it is sometimes with the satisfactory result that we get agreement upon some broad principle. It has been so in this matter of art. If you take the great thinkers, they have agreed upon this—that in testing the work of the artist you must look for two things. It is not enough to find excellence in the reproduction of nature, whether it be of scenery or of sentiment. When you look merely for reproduction, a photograph is often more accurate than a painting, and yet a photograph is not the same thing as a painting; it is not a work of art in the same sense.

In the work of the great artist we have some scene of nature, some scene, it may be, of human emotion, reproduced and depicted so as to make it symbolise a great standpoint or a great idea. Take a landscape of Turner's. That picture has not the fulness of detail of nature. It is only a few dashes of paint upon canvas, but there comes in the marvellous technique of the artist, who is able by seizing upon certain impressions, certain signs, to symbolise and bring vividly before the eye his own, the great artists', conception of a landscape. Take again, a picture of Raphael's. His Madonna brings before the mind something that the work of no other artist does, because we have there, looking at us from the canvas, the embodiment of a great idea—the idea of The Woman to whom was given the destiny of being the Mother of God, in the tenderness and full consciousness of her Motherhood merging and losing Herself in the passionately pure conception of what the destiny was to which she had been called.

Or, if you please, consider a Dutch landscape. In it the artist has taken hold of the still life which was the conception of the picture, and, in the very details which he has brought before us, has tried to suggest to our minds the idea, it may be, of the interior of a cottage or the very simple lives of the people or at least something more than the mere dry facts. The idea has been the perfect fitting of these things into the harmony of nature. It was the conception that made the thing great. The difference between the ordinary photograph and the picture is, that the photograph is merely reproductive, but in the picture the details are subordinated to a conception. The greater the artist, the higher his standpoint, the greater is the conception of which he is capable, and the more that conception is symbolised.

Schopenhauer, perhaps one of the greatest critics that ever lived, and one of the most acute and most comprehensive minds that has ever dealt with the difference between the artist and the ordinary man, has written :—

"While to the ordinary man his faculty of knowledge is a lamp to lighten his path, to the man of genius it is the sun which reveals the world." That was a noble simile. Then again : "The truth which lies at the foundation of all art is that its object, the representation of which is the aim of the artist, and the capacity for which must precede his work as its germ and its source, is an idea in Plato's sense, and never anything else, not the particular thing the object of common apprehension, and not the abstract principle, the object of science." I found these passages in a book of his which chanced to be by me as I travelled down here, and I think they are worth quoting.

The ordinary man, Schopenhauer said, looking at a landscape takes in the general idea—quite enough for his purpose—but the artist gives one the landscape from another point of view altogether, suggesting, it may be, the power or the peace of nature, or the notion of destiny or of force with which we cannot cope, such as Turner suggested in his masses of cloud, and in the presence of which we feel how small a thing is man. As Goethe said long ago, the real question in determining greatness is the question of "size"—of largeness of view. But it does not do to describe a subject in abstract terms, for prose will do as well as poetry for that. What is important is that there comes in a limit to the power of expression in prose, for it is perhaps only through verse—first as through the brush of the painter or the instrument of the musician, in a word, through art—that it is possible to bring before people's minds that something which is really inexpressible, which is beyond abstract language, and which can be suggested only by symbols, but which may not the less embody a great conception.

I have diverged into these considerations because I needed to do so in order to answer the question what it is that marked out the Brontë sisters. There was a great difference between them and other writers of fiction in their descriptions of scenery. The commonplace writer gives us details as to a certain person who lived in a certain way, and who he tells us was wonderfully strong or wonderfully beautiful, and this sort of writer writes as though by piling up language a weak impression can be

made more vivid. But in the work of Charlotte Brontë or in *Wuthering Heights* there is nothing of that kind. What is set out there is the actual facts suggesting and symbolising the qualities which the commoner writer would have to resort to names to indicate, but which in the work of the Brontës are irresistibly borne in upon the reader. This is what is meant by the quality of "inevitableness." In *Jane Eyre*—and most of us have steeped ourselves in that history of a country girl, moving among people far above her—there is borne in upon us what we cannot doubt, and what compels our conviction—how immeasurably stronger and greater was the girl's vitality than that of the people among whom she was cast. Who does not feel that there was all the difference in the world between Jane Eyre and the other women of the story when Rochester—rugged, storm-tossed, blind, deformed—demanded of her if she loved him sufficiently to be his wife, and she answered simply, "To the finest fibre of my nature, sir"? That girl, surging with passion, full of vitality, tenderness, and courage, is a real figure on the canvass, compelling us to follow her just as much as if we had known and spoken to her in life.

That great quality which Matthew Arnold and Swinburne have both described as inevitableness is the characteristic of the work of the Brontë sisters—the secret of this power of their writing; as Swinburne has called it, "A power to make us feel in every nerve, at every step forward which our imagination is compelled to take under the guidance of another's, that thus, and not otherwise, but in all things altogether, even as we are told and shown it was and must have been with the human figures set before us."

This is what we have in the writings of both Charlotte and Emily; we find it in *Jane Eyre*, and in each of the two other great novels which Charlotte wrote, *Villette* and *Shirley*. We find it again in *Wuthering Heights*. It is just that sense of the reality of nature, that power of the great artist to select the parts of Nature which suggest and symbolise an idea that distinguishes these two sisters. There is nothing artificial about them; they wrote because they must write; it was there, and it was surging through their veins, and it was their life to put it upon paper. Quality and not quantity is the test, as Goethe said. But then Charlotte produced three great prose novels to Emily's one, and Emily's novel, magnificent though it

is in its sexless passion, is still a fragment, imperfect in technique and finish, in comparision with that which Charlotte did. It has so happened that perhaps because of the quantity of Charlotte's work, notwithstanding the equal quality of Emily's prose, Charlotte has been put as the first figure. I cannot—I may be wrong—but I cannot follow that judgment. It seems to me to ignore something that lies beyond, and when I find such men as Mr. Swinburne and Mr. Matthew Arnold taking the view that in Emily "a lineal daughter of the earth-born giants," as Swinburne calls her, you have something different from Charlotte, I feel myself impelled to that conviction too.

I will put in a few words what it is that for me marks Emily out for a special position unique in our literature. Emily wrote verses, and Charlotte did not—I do not mean that Charlotte did not leave a great mass of verse. She did, but there are not four lines worth repeating. Magnificent as is her prose, she seemed to lose her faculty in verse. Emily died at 29. She had little opportunity of benefitting by criticism, but she left four or five poems behind her, of which three at least seem to belong to the great things not merely of the literature of our country but of all nations. She effected in the medium of verse the symbolising of the idea. Who is there that, listening to a symphony of Beethoven's, or the middle movement, say, of the funeral march of Chopin, or to some music of Wagner, does not feel his imagination elevated to a point beyond expression, to a point that is impersonal? That is what music, or the pictorial art, or poetry at their highest can do for us. Emily Brontë had that tremendous gift of verse.

I will use once more Mr. Swinburne's words, because they fully express my own feelings. Mr. Swinburne said:—"But the pure note of absolutely right expression for things inexpressible in full by prose at its highest point of adequacy—this is what Emily had for her birthright, as certainly as Charlotte had it not."

The greatest of Emily's poems,—one of the greatest poems I know in any language, is those last lines written before she died. The idea underlying them, the conception, the standpoint, is immeasurably beyond the ordinary standpoint. It was just before she died, when the mists of death were almost gathered upon her brow, when she, a country girl brought up in a country vicarage, under the traditions of Christianity, might well have turned to the ordinary consolations which weaker spirits require,

the ordinary props which are needed by those who have to enter the River. Not so with Emily. The first words that break from her shew her "as utterly disdainful of doctrine as of doubt;"—she had a faith in her greater than could be expressed by any creed.

No coward soul is mine,
No trembler on the world's storm-troubled sphere:
I see Heaven's glories shine,
And faith shines equal, arming me from fear.
O God within my breast,
Almighty, ever-present Deity!
Life—that in me has rest,
As I—undying Life—have power in Thee!
Vain are the thousand creeds
That move men's hearts: unutterably vain;
Worthless as withered weeds,
Or idlest froth amid the boundless main.
To waken doubt in one
Holding so fast by Thine infinity;
So surely anchored on
The steadfast rock of immortality.
With wide-embracing love
Thy spirit animates eternal years.
Pervades and broods above,
Changes, sustains, dissolves, creates, and rears.
Though earth and man were gone,
And suns and universes ceased to be,
And Thou were left alone,
Every existence would exist in Thee.
There is not room for death,
Nor atom that his might could render void:
Thou—Thou art Being and Breath,
And what Thou art may never be destroyed.

Here you have expression of a faith that is unshakable, a faith so great that it can defy the terrors which overwhelm ordinary mortals.

Who that has read that poem has not recalled the immortal passage from "Sartor Resartus," where the voice, in the Rue de l'Enfer, surged up in the man in an everlasting "Yea," which dispelled doubt and delivered him from terror? Call it what you may—Pantheism, Panlogism—Emily Brontë felt her identity with Him in whom she had so profound a faith, and it was this that enabled her to rise above the mysteries of death and to look down on them fearlessly.

These verses will go down with the great things of literature. To find a parallel to them in strength you must go back to Greek and Roman poetry; something of the same spirit there is in Lucretius when he breaks forth;

something of the same spirit you have in Goethe's "Faust" in the confession scene with Marguerite in the garden. This, indeed, is a testimony to genius, that a girl, circumstanced as this one was, should from her meagre surroundings, have uttered words which will remain on record as among the greatest which humanity has ever uttered on the greatest and most inscrutable of all topics.

Emily is to be seen in another mood—a mood less great, perhaps, but very striking, in another poem, which, I think is in form even more perfect than that I have just quoted. This is the well-known poem called *The old Stoic*.

Riches I hold in light esteem,
And Love I laugh to scorn;
And lust of fame was but a dream,
That vanished with the morn:

And if I pray, the only prayer
That moves my lips for me,
Is "Leave the heart that now I bear,
And give me liberty!"

Yes, as my swift days near their goal,
'Tis all that I implore;
In life and death a chainless soul,
With courage to endure.

The third great poem, in my opinion, is that called *Remembrance*—which tells of a lover separated for fourteen years from the mistress, taken from him by death. In that poem we have that which for me is among the most beautiful lines in the English language—"Severed at last by time's all-severing wave"—

Cold in the earth—and the deep snow piled above thee,
Far, far removed, cold in the dreary grave!
Have I forgot, my only love, to love thee,
Severed at last by time's all-severing wave?

Now, when alone, do my thoughts no longer hover
Over the mountains, on that northern shore,
Resting their wings, where heath and fern-leaves cover
Thy noble heart for ever, ever more?

Cold in the earth—and fifteen wild Decembers,
From those brown hills, have melted into spring;
Faithful, indeed, is the spirit that remembers
After such years of change and suffering!

Sweet Love of youth, forgive, if I forget thee,
While the world's tide is bearing me along;
Other desires and other hopes beset me,
Hopes which obscure, but cannot do thee wrong.

No later light has lightened up my heaven,
No second morn has ever shone for me;
All my life's bliss from thy dear life was given,
All my life's bliss is in the grave with thee.

But when the days of golden dreams had perished,
And even Despair was powerless to destroy;
Then did I learn how existence could be cherished,
Strengthened, and fed without the aid of joy.

Then did I check the tears of useless passion—
Weaned my young soul from yearning after thine;
Sternly denied its burning wish to hasten
Down to that tomb already more than mine.

And, even yet, I dare not let it languish,
Dare not indulge in memory's rapturous pain;
Once drinking deep of that divinest anguish,
How could I seek the empty world again?

If you take quality as distinguished from quantity—if you pass over the littleness of the work she left—she was young when she died—and if you judge her by the standard of Goethe—the standard of largeness, of size, then in point of symbolism and in point of the greatness of idea, Emily must be placed not only above Charlotte, but with Shakespeare and Milton and the greatest writers in English literature, and with the powerful minds that have sufficiently confronted and expressed themselves on the deepest problems which can rise before the human mind Charlotte was great, but Emily had a greater sort of greatness. The world has too little of her work. It knows only what her passion was, and with what power she expressed it—she whose soul, as Matthew Arnold wrote—

Knew no fellow for might,
Passion, vehemence, grief,
Daring, since Byron died.

You here, men and women of Yorkshire, are privileged to have that priceless heritage of their memories near you. Genius, when it manifests itself so, has this advantage over action that action and the records of action pass away. There is something essentially transitory about the great career as there is something transitory about even the work of the great reformer. The memories of great men who have been men of deeds fade and pass away, but when genius manifests itself in that other form of expression of ideas, then the records which it leaves behind are imperishable, because they are not subject to the limits of space, nor do they fade away with time. And the treasure which the Brontës have left behind, and which cannot be touched by the lapse of ages, will represent the truth centuries hereafter to the men and women who read their works just as it represents the truth to us who are privileged to read those works now.

HAWORTH.

Being a paper prepared for the use of the Members of the British Association, at their meeting in Bradford, September 1900, by Mr. J. F. Greenwood, and ordered to be re-printed for the use of Members of the Brontë Society, April, 1901.

The visitor to Haworth will probably be disappointed by his first impressions of the place. Apart from the hills, most of the elements of the picturesque are absent. Vegetation is scarce, and the hillsides themselves are bleak and bare. The view which first presents itself, is that of a straggling village, equal in size to many south country towns, rising on two sides of a somewhat narrow and precipitous valley, running north and south. On the eastern slope of the valley, the buildings are almost entirely of recent date, and old Haworth with its long, steep, and tortuous main street on the opposite hillside, has been modernised to a very considerable extent—new rows of cottages branching in almost every direction.

Both in old and new Haworth, the houses are placed in unpicturesque confusion. The monotony of the landscape is broken by chapels and schools, and numerous large factories, with all of which the neighbourhood abounds. The chimneys of the latter buildings rise high in the air, like lofty minarets, and call the faithful to work, if not to prayer. High over all, on the summit of the hill, up whose side winds the Main Street, rises the church tower—four square, plain, grim, weather-beaten, a landmark for many miles round.

Whatever Haworth may have been in the past, it is to-day, pre-eminently industrial, and for a generation at least, work has been abundant, and the prosperity of the workers is in evidence on every hand. The houses, although somewhat plain in external appearance, are well and stoutly built, as they had need be, to withstand the rough inclement weather so common in this part of Yorkshire, and they are generally comfortably and perhaps luxuriously furnished inside.

The hills round about Haworth rise to a height of about a thousand feet above sea level, and terminate in wide expanses of breezy moorlands, miles of which sweep far away into the west, and on to the borders of Lancashire. There is but little arable land in the parish; occasionally an adventurous farmer essays a crop of oats, but as a rule

he meets with small success. The farms themselves are small, and the tenants devote themselves principally to the ordinary produce of the dairy. Stone being very plentiful, the fences and other boundaries are of this material. Hedges and ditches, such as are found in more genial climates, are here almost entirely absent, and the stone walls add to the general bleakness and coldness of the landscape. A village near Haworth was once described as having "nine months of winter weather, and three months tolerable." The description is not inapplicable to Haworth itself, for here the weather is often cold, wet, windy, and boisterous in the extreme. The rainfall is considerably in excess of the general rainfall in England, and during the early part of the year, the east and north-east winds prevail. Such in brief is Haworth, and yet it is famous, and has been famous for half a century at least, with a fame all its own. In its material characteristics, there are twenty other villages like it in Yorkshire's West Riding—twenty other villages, stone built, busy, prosperous, given over to money-making—"addling brass" it is called locally—dirty, unpicturesque in detail, if picturesque in situation, and with few natural attractions; and yet there is but one Haworth, and Haworth owes its fame, and attracts even thousands of visitors to-day, to the circumstance that it was the home of the Brontës, and that in Haworth was played nearly the whole tragedy of their sad and sorrowful lives. The bleak stone-built parsonage, with dreary outlook across the church-yard and its crowded tombstones, was their home; within its walls, with one exception, they died; and in this quiet moorland village was wrought out the story of their brief existences, full of griefs, and trouble, and disappointments, and crowned by success when it came all too late.

The area of interest to the visitor is but very limited in extent. No dismantled castle of historic fame, no ruined abbey, attracts the antiquarian; no battlefield, the historian; traces of the ubiquitous Roman are few, and these some distance away. There is nothing unique in the geology of the district, nor in its *flora*. Of *fauna* it may be said to have none. Buildings or remains of buildings linking a matter-of-fact material present with a romantic past are wanting. Except the Church tower, the chronology of which is doubtful, there are few buildings which date back farther than the end of the seventeenth or beginning of the eighteenth century, and of these the number is

exceedingly small. Remains of two stone crosses have been found in outlying parts of the district—one at Oxenhope, about a mile and a-half south-west of Haworth; and one in Stanbury, a small village a mile or so away in a north-westerly direction—but of their actual history nothing is known. It has been surmised that Haworth had certain rights of sanctuary in the olden time, and that these crosses marked the limits of such rights; but this is pure conjecture, and beyond the existence of the crosses themselves there is no historical proof of it. Apart from those glorious spreading uplands, the moors stretching away to the west as far as eye can reach, almost the whole area of interest will be found in that part of Old Haworth lying at or near the top of the main street. Within a stone's throw of this point, and of each other, there may be found grouped together—like the Four Structures in the old town of Pisa—church, churchyard, parsonage, and village inn. These are all, and these are not as they were fifty years ago, nearly all of them having been changed, modernised, enlarged and "improved." The rectory has been enlarged, the churchyard extended and planted with trees of which there were none in the Brontës' days; and, with the exception of the tower, the church has been entirely rebuilt in a totally different style from that which preceeded it.

It will be seen, then, that Haworth has changed very considerably in recent years, and an attempt to picture Haworth as it was, half a century or more ago, or as it was during the time of the Brontës, is not uninteresting. A few dates here will not be out of place.

The Revd. Patrick Brontë, father of the three celebrated sisters, was married in 1812, when incumbent of Hartshead, in the parish of Dewsbury, a small village as bleak and exposed and uninteresting as Haworth itself, and some fifteen or twenty miles away in a southerly direction. Here were born his two eldest children, Maria and Elizabeth. In 1815, Mr. Brontë accepted the living of Thornton, near Bradford, and in this village were born, first his daughter Charlotte, on April 21st, 1816, and afterwards, and in quick succession, Patrick Branwell (his only son), Emily Jane—known to the world as Emily only—and Anne, his youngest child. In 1820 (on February 21st) Mr. Brontë removed to Haworth, and lived here until his death, which occurred in 1861.

Remembering these dates, and how the means of communication have developed, methods of transit improved,

and conveniences and luxuries of modern life multiplied during the present century, it will easily be imagined what an out-of-the-world, old-time little village Haworth was in those days. Mr. Brontë himself was the last surviving member of his family; and the railway connecting Haworth with Keighley was not made until some years after his death. Even the main line running from Leeds through Keighley to the North was then quite of recent construction, and in Mrs. Gaskell's "Life of Charlotte Brontë" we often read of "the coach," "a covered cart," and "the Haworth gig" as usual forms of conveyance. Small wonder, then, that under these circumstances a country village like Haworth, in a remote and secluded valley, should have been a little world in itself—with no great attractiveness in it to a stranger—its inhabitants, rude and uncultivated, but of marked individuality both in character and in speech. To picture the Haworth of those days, therefore, it is necessary to blot out or sweep away the railway, with all its adjuncts of station, platform warehousing, sidings, and the like. The land now used for railway purposes was then all green fields—meadow and pasture land, as rich and fertile as any to be found in the valley—intersected by the beck or rivulet, then a pretty trout stream flowing down the valley over its stony bed, to join the Aire a few miles further on. The beck is now used by the local authority as a convenient and useful drain.

Fifty or sixty years ago, the manufacturing industries of which one hears so much, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, were then in their infancy, and some at least of the operations carried on collectively, in the large factories now to be seen on every hand, were then performed by hand-labour in cottages scattered far and wide, over the country side. This was specially the case with the combing of the wool, and the weaving of the cloth, and combing and weaving were then done at home by the workman, who not unfrequently varied his mechanical operations by the expenditure of such care and labour as were necessary in the management of a few acres of grass land. The growth of the modern factory system has naturally stimulated the increase of population, and this to a greater extent even than is evidenced by the local census returns; but it has also compelled the workman in many instances to forsake his cottage home on the hill side and moor edges, and establish himself and family in a newer home as near his new place of employment as can easily be found. As a

result of the change, many cottages are to-day empty and in ruins in the outskirts of the district, while in the central parts streets of new houses have sprung into existence on every side, and the population is in a somewhat congested condition. New Haworth, or the "Brow Side" as it is often called locally, is very new, indeed; and five-and-twenty or thirty years only have been required to transform meadow lands and pasture fields into a crowded and badly-built suburb of the old village.

Old Haworth itself consisted for the most part of the church, with its surrounding buildings; some three or four village inns hard by; a few small streets of cottages, at the top of the hill, easily recognisable by the blackness of the stone of which they are built, and by the peculiar formation of their long low windows, showing they were erected in a time when handweaving was in vogue—the loom being placed along the window, to obtain the fullest possible amount of light. The buildings in the main street terminated halfway down the hill, at that point now called Hall Green, this part of the roadway taking its name from an old weather-stained hall still standing there. This interesting and picturesque old building was built probably some 250 or 300 years ago, by the Emmott family, then amongst the principal landowners of the neighbourhood, and still owning, though to a smaller extent, some of the property in Haworth. With the exception of the church, the Hall is perhaps the oldest building in the district, and though not in a good state of preservation, is worthy of a visit if time permit, and is interesting as showing a style of architecture more in keeping with the general features of the landscape than those now commonly adopted. At Hall Green the main street or road divides; one part continuing due south, and forming the high road to Halifax. The other branch dips down the hillside into the valley, and, crossing the stream by a bridge, zigzags up the opposite hillside and becomes the high road to Bradford. There were a few cottages at these points, a small mill worked by water power, near the bridge just mentioned, and these, with three or four turnpike gates at as many entrances to the village, constituted Haworth as it was in the days of the Brontës.

So much for the general features of the place—present and past; of its history there is but little to be said, and it is highly probable that but for its connection with the Brontë family, it would have remained obscure and

comparatively unknown. Some suppose Haworth to be a place of considerable antiquity, and possibly this is so, but the theory that there was a church here in the year 600 A.D., as is evidenced by a stone in the south side of the church tower, may be dismissed as absurd. The village is not mentioned in the Domesday Book, and probably the earliest official record is one that dates back to the thirteenth century. It is worthy of note that in Richard II.'s reign, in 1380, forty persons paid a poll-tax in Haworth. In Bradford township the number so assessed was only fifty-nine. Later, as showing the relative importance of some of the various townships in the West Riding, we find that under the Riding Rate made in Queen Elizabeth's reign, in 1582, Haworth paid 1s.; Hothersfield (Huddersfield), 1s. 5d.; Bradford, 1s. 8d.; Halifax, 1s. 7d.; Ilkley, 6d.; and Otley, 10d.

That there has been a church at Haworth for a considerable period, is indisputable, though the evidence on the subject is so conflicting, and of so meagre a character, it is impossible to say for how long a time. In 1317 a decree was issued, commanding the rector and vicar of Bradford, and the freeholders of Haworth, to pay to the curate of Haworth chapel, the salary due to him in the proportions to which they had been liable *from ancient times;* and again in 1320, a monition was issued from the Archbishop of York's Court, commanding the rector of Bradford, to pay to the chaplain twenty shillings, the vicar of Bradford two marks and a-half, and the inhabitants of Haworth one mark, to sustain a chaplain officiating in the chapel of Haworth. There is other evidence of a like character.

The building as seen to-day is, with the exception of the tower, quite modern, having been built about twenty years ago. It is a handsome structure, calling for no special remark. Most of the stained-glass windows have been put in by the principal families of the neighbourhood in memory of deceased relatives. Charlotte Brontë's memory has been immortalised in this way by an American citizen.

The older church, on the site of which the present building is placed, was plain and unpretentious in appearance, and was probably built about the middle of the eighteenth century. The church had double aisles, old-fashioned horse-box pews made from unstained oak, darkened by age, a three-decker pulpit with sounding board overhead, and two east windows. Near the entrance

to the churchyard from the main street, and in the angle formed by the juncture of the gateway wall, with the wall of the Black Bull Inn, a pair of stocks formerly stood. These were removed at the time the church was rebuilt (1880).

The church tower is probably a little older than the eighteenth century church just described, but how much it is impossible to say. There are one or two inscriptions on its south face which have long puzzled antiquarians. Perhaps the one which has occasioned the most contention and dispute, and on which claims of antiquity chiefly rest, is that which reads as follows :—

Respecting this inscription Whitaker says :— "Every antiquary knows that the formula of prayer, 'bono statu' always refers to the living. I suspect this singular Christian name has been mistaken by the stone-cutter for Austet, a contraction of Eustatius, but the word Tod, which has been misread for the Arabic figures 600, is perfectly fair and legible. On the presumption of this foolish claim to antiquity, the people would needs set up for independence, and contest the right of the vicar of Bradford to nominate a curate at Haworth."

The tower itself has not escaped the hand of the improver, for about thirty years ago a clock was put in, and to provide the necessary space, the tower was raised some nine or ten feet.

A peal of bells, six in number, is hung in the tower, and on the largest or tenor bell, which weighs nearly twelve hundredweight, is the following inscription :

"These bells were raised by subscription by the
Rev. P. Brontë, A.B., incumbent.
Mr. George Feather and
Mr. James Lambert,
Churchwardens."

The bells were cast by S. & G. Mears, founders, of Whitechapel, London, and the date they bear is 1845. The total weight of metal in them, is upwards of two tons.

On entering the church, it will be found that the majority of the memorial tablets are ranged round the internal walls of the tower, and those walls immediately adjoining the west window. There are one or two notifying certain charitable bequests, and a few commending the many excellencies of deceased Haworth citizens; the one which probably will attract the greatest amount of interest bears the following inscription:—

In Memory of

Maria, wife of the Revd. P. Brontë, A.B., Minister of Haworth. She died Sept. 15th 1821, in the 39th year of her age.

Also of Maria, their daughter, who died May 6th 1825, in the 12th year of her age.

Also of Elizabeth, their daughter, who died June 15th 1825, in the 11th year of her age.

Also of Patrick Branwell, their son, who died Sept. 29th 1848, aged 31 years.

Also of Emily Jane, their daughter, who died Dec. 19th 1848, aged 30 years.

Also of Anne, their daughter, who died May 28th 1849, aged 29 years. She was buried at the Old Church, Scarborough.

Also of Charlotte, their daughter, wife of the Rev. A. B. Nicholls, B.A. She died March 31st 1855, in the 39th year of her age.

Also of the aforenamed Rev. P. B. Brontë, A.B., who died June 7th, 1861, in the 85th year of his age, having been incumbent of Haworth for upwards of 41 years.

"The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1. *Cor.*, *xv.*, 56, 57.

Passing down the central aisle to the foot of the Communion rails, and slightly on the right hand side, a small brass tablet or plate has been let into the floor. On it are the words:—

In Memory of

EMILY JANE BRONTË,

Who Died Dec. 19th, 1848,

Aged 30 Years;

and of

CHARLOTTE BRONTË,

Born April 21, 1816;

Died March 31, 1855.

The entries in the registers kept in the vestry date as far back as 1645. Other registers of an even older date are believed to be in existence, but it is not known in whose possession they are. The register containing all the entries from 1645 to 1727 is only a copy of the original, and was made in the year 1786. The originals were spoiled by damp Some of the entries are sufficiently quaint to be copied here. The earlier ones have been made by the parish clerk, a man called Ikkringill, who apparently held office for several years. Each year he was in the habit of entering in the register some of the notable events of the year.

The first to be noticed is in the year 1648, and reads as follows :—

> "On the 18th Day of —— in this year a Battle was fought between the Armies of England and Scotland. Lord Cromwell and Major-General Lambert being at the head of ye English Army, and Duke Hamilton and Sr Marmaduke Langdale at the Head of the Army made up of fugitive English and Scots. The latter were (by God's Assistance) foiled, routed and pursued, and the said Duke Langdale taken, with many great Lords and Gentlemen of ye Scottish Nation, besides 10,000 Common Soldiers, as many more were slain; there being by their own Confession, and as it appears by the Muster Rolls 25,000 at least of the Scotts and 600 more of ffugitive English and Vagrant or Vagabond Souls."
>
> "A great Snow fell about ffastons *(sic)* Even, the week following being the 2nd week of ye Year, which continued till ye last week of the same winter."

The Battle referred to in the above entry was evidently the battle of Preston, in Lancashire, which was fought on three or four successive days (Aug. 17—20). It would naturally excite much interest in Haworth and neighbourhood, for Cromwell marched from Otley to meet the invaders, passing along Wharfedale to Skipton, and thence, via Clitheroe, to Preston. Wharfedale is only a few miles from Haworth, and lies on the farther side of the hills to the north of Keighley. Skipton is about ten miles away in a north-westerly direction. The particulars of the battle are fairly accurate, as may been seen on comparison with the account given by Cromwell himself. (See "Cromwell's Letters and Speeches," Carlyle.) The enthusiasm shown by the worthy clerk at the victory of the Parliamentarian

forces is rather odd, when taken in conjunction with the entry made by him a dozen years later, on the accession of Charles II. to the throne.

1649. Notable in this Year.

"E'er it was known Carolum Regem mag: Brit: et Hyber: decap: fuisse; there was a continual frosty Winter, and the Spring, though not violent yet lasting."

"On the 25 day of ffebry this year, being Monday there were two Suns appeared on either Side of the real Sun in the ffirmament; wch made three Suns in all. They were seen betwixt Nine and Fleven by the Country People assembled at the great ffair of Cattle kept in Colne situate in the County Palatine of Lancaster."

"On the 3rd of Septr. there was a bloody battle fot. at Worcester by Cromwell."

In the burial notices for this year (1649) occur the following:—

"Harrison, a Taylor, buried, who died an untimely Death being Drunk; he fell into the North Beck, Oxenhope, wch together with the ffrost air starved him to Death on ye Night of Sunday the 15th of November. Let all Drunkards that know it, take warning and avoid profaning the Sabbath Day. Sic invenitur per Juris d. Coronoris."

"James Smith, of Holmhouse, my kinsman, buried at Keighley the — of Day of November An Dom: 1649; slain accidentally by the fforking of an Ox, with a Butcher's Knife in his own Hand, which violently gliding off the said Joint, stabbed and ran into the Sinews and Veins of his thigh whereof (by the excessive Bloodings ffostering and swelling of the Wound) he died within a Month after the Mischance."

Notable. (1652.)

"In this Year it was such a Drought between the —— and the first week of June that during all that Season there was but one shower within the Limits of Haworth Parish wch was so small that it would scarce wet a Hand. The Grass was very short and slender and in many Places scorched The Corn Lands were scorched (except in moist Places) but it pleasing God to bless Haworth and other English Inhabitants

in June aforesaid they were much meliorated and heightened, so that there was a good Harvest. And this Year Wheat exceeded all other Grain (other Grain being but generally slender) yea the Harvest was so forward that some Oats were reaped at Haworth on the second of ——

"On ffriday the 20th Day of August the same Year, a storm of Wind and Hail for the Space of a Quarter of an Hour did much damage to standing Corn; the fform of the Hailstones was Strange, some shaped like Spurr Rowels with sharp Points, like Dog Tooth; other like Pikes and Arrow Pikes (?). Icicles at the House Eaves in a ffrost, some of them five Inches about, which broke with the violence of the Wind."

"It was the Effects of the Conjunction of Saturn and Mars; those planets being then supposed to be conjoined in the Sign of Leo, at that storm of Hail.

"This year there were Blackberries or Bilberries gotten in the latter end of —— a second Growth. Also some ffruit trees bare second ffruit."

Under the head of marriages, 1653, is the following:—

"Augst. A Gentleman surnamed Reesboy (?), and the Relict of one Mr. Oates, being sister of John Midgley of Headley, married by a Man like a Minister whom they brought along with them to Town.

From this, and the next notice, it seems there was no settled minister in Haworth at this date, for we read as follows, under date

1654.

Mr. Edmund Garforth began to officiate as minister at Haworth by Commission from the Commissioners at London, ordained and improved for the Settling and Approbation of Public Preachers (He having been first approved of and recommended unto them by the Certificate of most of the substantial Inhabitants of the said Parochial Chapelry of Haworth) on the Twelfth Day of June, this Year."

The only other "notable" entry in 1655, is one occupying several pages in the register about a story of a Magpie, a Jackdaw, and a Buzzard, told to Earl Glamorgan and Marquis Worcester, at Carnarvon, by some of the inhabitants of that town. It is too long to be quoted here, and the connection between the anecdote and Haworth is by no means clear.

Wild and stormy weather is frequently alluded to in these entries. It often furnishes the only matter for remark. Note the following:—

[Notable 1655.]

"There was such a continual wet Sumer (?) this Year that most of the Hay was to sun (or dry) about the Western parts of Yorkshire at the middle of August, yea, it was the Middle of September or the Hay was sunned generally, at Haworth."

In 1657 an early summer is mentioned. "Barley was offered in Keighley Market on July 22nd. The winter and spring following (1657-58) were cold, stormy and late. Seed time cold and wet." 1658 also chronicles wild weather and floods.

In 1660 it is recorded that "King Charles the 2nd was crowned King of England ffrance and Ireland on the 23rd day of April, 1660." Then comes a long and florid description of the coronation and national rejoicings, "not a drop of rain did fall until the Solemnity was fully over; so that the giddy Brethren (who desired all to be Rulers, and would have no other) were forced to confess, That as we never had such a King; so we never had such a Coronation."

In 1682 among the items entered is one to the effect that in December in that year, a collection was made (presumably in the church) for the Relief and Release of ffoxcroft prisoner under the Algerines, which said collection realised the sum of 9s. 10d. This was not the only act of generosity on the part of the Haworth people, for later, in 1688, there is the following:—"Colld of the Inhabitants of the Chapelry of Haworth according to his Majesty's letters patent for the poor Distressed ffrench Protestants the sum of 14s. 10½. A collection made on behalf of John Wood, merchant, of Hull, realised the sum of 2s. 6d. A contribution was also made during the year towards the repair of St. Alban's Cathedral in Hertfordshire.

The succeeding register, which is an original one, is of vellum, and the majority of the entries are beautifully engrossed, with, in some cases, the initial letter of a varied colour. As might be expected, the oddness of the entries decreases with succeeding years, but the following are not without interest:—

Under date June 1st, 1733:—The following were married at Bradford and by ye Clog and Shoe, in

Lancashire, but paid the minister of Haworth his Dues. (Then follows a list of the names of sixteen couples, with the addresses of the several parties concerned.)

Again :—

"Ic Smith came to Haworth to be Minister there Oct. 2, 1726. And raised the Church Rents *vi et armis*, 1727.

"Wheras (?) it has heretofore been a corrupt Custom, after receiving ye Holy Eucharist or Sacrament, for the Church Officers to dine in an Alehouse, together with ye Minister, this is the Rule or Order which in the fear of God we design henceforth to follow, viz.: On every Christmas Day and Good Friday, After Evening Prayer, the Minister, Clark, and Churchwardens with any other of ye Parishioners who have a mind to go with them are to take a moderate Repast in some Inn or Alehouse. But on Palm Sunday, Easter Sunday, Whit Sunday and Michaelmas Sunday (commonly called the Tide Sunday) everyone is to dine at his own Home: as witness our Hands. Dec. 25: 1733.

I. SMITH, *Minister.*
TIMOTHY JUDSON, *Clark.*
ADAM WRIGHT, } *Churchwardens.*
JOHN ROBERTS, }

"N.B.—It was afterwards agreed to get our Supper together on each of the Days aforesaid."

A little later an entry records the fact that

"Henry Helliwell takes ye Grass in the Churchyard for Fifteen Pounds of Candles (three in ye Pound) every year which are used for light at Six O'clock prayers on Saturday Evenings and burying ye Dead when occasion should require, as may be seen by a Deed writte on Stampt paper and in ye keeping of Haworth Currer Esq of Kildwick."

[On March 16th, 1737.]

"The Revd. Isaac Smith, M.A., was suspended from his Ministerial Function for Publishing and Marrying a Couple from Bradford Parish. Till Whitsunday May 17, 1741, on which day he again began his ministerial functions.

"As witness my hand.

"IS: SMITH."

This inhibition does not seem to have prevented him exercising his ministerial functions altogether, as the following entry shows :—

> "May 15, 1739, at 6 o'clock in the Evening, the Houses in Haworth called the *Parsonage* (not the present one) were solemnly Dedicated and so Named with Prayers, Aspersions, Acclamations, and Crossings, by I. S. &c.

Surely Mr. Smith was a prototype of the modern ritualist. Original and eccentric as he must have been, he did not live long to enjoy either the renewed ministerial functions, or his parsonage which had been so thoroughly and effectively consecrated, for

> "On May 16, 1742. The Revd. Wm. Grimshaw of Xts. Coll. Camb. succeeded the Revd. Mr. Isaac Smith late Incumbent, deceas'd in the Parochial Curacy of Haworth having been Minister of ye Parochial Curacy of Todmorden in ye County of Lancaster 10 years and 9 months. He was born in Brindle nr. Preston in ye County aforesaid.—And was educated at the Free School of Blackburn by Mr. George Smith Head Master thereof for some years; but was afterwards Remov'd to the ffree School of Heskin and put under ye care of Mr. Thos: Johnson Headmaster thereof and from thence was sent to be admitted Member of ye University and College above mentioned.
>
> Witness my hand
> WILLIAM GRIMSHAW.
> Min-de-Haworth.

The rectory lies west of the church, about 50 or 60 yards away. A veritable dwelling among the tombs, for on two sides it is enclosed by the church yard, with its crowded graves and numberless tombstones. Fifty years ago no trees were to be seen from its windows save one or two stunted bushes. All else was a wilderness of stone. And looking from its windows on one of those wild wet days so frequent at Haworth, one can easily see whence Charlotte Brontë drew her inspiration when she wrote the famous passage in "Shirley" beginning "This is an autumn evening, wet and wild. There is only one cloud in the sky; but it curtains it from pole to pole. The wind cannot rest; it hurries sobbing over hills of sullen outline, colourless with twilight and mist. Rain had beat all day on that church tower; it rises dark from the stony

enclosure of its graveyard: the nettles, the long grass all drip with wet. * * * * They knew they had lost something whose absence could never be quite atoned for, so long as they lived; and they knew that heavy falling rain was soaking into the wet earth which covered their lost darling, and that the sad sighing gale was mourning above her buried head. The fire warmed them, Life and Friendship yet blessed them: but Jessie lay cold, coffined, solitary—only the sod screening her from the storm."

The rectory itself, stone built and stone roofed, has been enlarged in recent years by the addition of a wing at its north end, and to some extent modernised as in the case of the windows, but its main features are the same as when erected 130 or 140 years ago. There is a central hall or lobby, with rooms right and left, the staircase ascending directly opposite the front entrance. In the Brontë days, the rooms were used as follows:—In front, the room on the left was the family sittingroom; that on the right being Mr. Brontë's library and study; behind the study was the kitchen, and behind the sitting-room, a store room. On the first floor and similarly arranged were four bedrooms, with the addition of a small room over the lobby or hall, used for purposes of study or recreation by the Brontës in their early days.

A narrow lane or street leads to the rectory, from the village, and terminates in a field footpath a little way past the rectory. This was the path usually chosen by the Brontë sisters in gaining access to their much loved moors.

It was a short cut, and prevented the necessity of passing through the village and coming into contact with its inhabitants, from whose rough manners and rude speech their super-sensitive spirits naturally shrank.

To many, the greatest charm and attraction of Haworth are its moors. North, west and south they are to be found—immense stretches of heather on almost every side, crowning nearly every hill, far and near, and, westwards, reaching apparently into infinity. Seen from a point west of the church, and not far from it, they outline the horizon for miles round, a wide rolling sweep of undulating hills—dark and sombre for the most part, even at mid-day, the sky line seldom, if ever, broken by building or any artificial formation. Nor is there tree or shrub in view. The soil is thin, poor, scanty; trees could not live on these heights; their roots would find no nourishment,

nor could they face the blasts of autumnal and winter storms.

There is always fresh air on the moors; pleasant life-giving invigorating breezes are found there even on hot summer days, when the air is stagnant and stifling in the valleys; in winter the wind blows over them, strong and keen. The moors inspire liberty. On them the thoughts go free. They fascinate; and over those who frequent them most, falls a strangely mysterious and magic spell. The moors are calling them, and they fall under the charm.

In appearance the moors change but little; in colour, slightly, with the changing seasons, but in form and outline never. The early summer sees them green in places with newly springing grasses, not the sweet soft blades beloved of kine, but hard, tough, wiry. Then, too, are seen the new shoots of the bilberry plant, with leaves tender and green, but the general aspect is dark, sullen, and sombre, and the colour of the moorland hills gives a fitting ground to the overhead canopy of leaden skies on an autumn day. The heather blooms at midsummer, and for a while the hillsides are purple and glorious, but the flowers do not last, and the glory fades away quickly.

Generally speaking, the moors are waterless, though here and there, is some quiet shaded hollow, a little pool can be found. Its margin is fringed with rushes, the water on its peaty bed lying silent and still, gloomy as

> "the dark pool of Auber,
> By the ghoul haunted region of Weir."

As might be expected, the moors grow little that sustains animal life. A few sheep are occasionally seen nibbling on the grassy patches, while overhead, a startled lapwing with mournful note seeks by halting flight to lure the stranger from its almost discovered nest; high in the blue, soars a hawk, keen of sight, searching for its prey, or the grouse, strong on the wing, dashes past, with hoarse unmusical call, and that is all.

The writer is indebted to Mrs. Gaskell's "Life of Charlotte Brontë," and Mr. J. H. Turner's "Haworth, Past and Present," for some of the above data. He also wishes to record his obligations to the Rev. T. W. Story, Rector of Haworth, by whose courtesy he has had free access to the Church Registers.

August, 1900. J. F. G.

BRONTË SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS.

PART XIII.

TRANSACTIONS:

CONTAINING

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

AT MORLEY,

And a Paper read before the Society.

PRINTED FOR THE SOCIETY BY
M. FIELD & SONS, SOUTHGATE, BRADFORD.

JANUARY, 1903.

NOTE.

The Council of the Brontë Society wish it to be understood that the Authors of the various Articles printed in the "Transactions" are alone responsible for the opinions expressed.

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EIGHTH
ANNUAL MEETING OF THE BRONTË SOCIETY.

The Eighth Annual Meeting was held in the Council Chamber of the Town Hall, Morley, on January 18th, 1902. There was a large attendance at the meeting, which was presided over by Mr. W. W. Yates, of Dewsbury, the chairman of the Council, who was supported by the following members: Mr. J. Caldwell (Brighouse), Mr. W. S. Cameron (Leeds), Mr. C. A. Federer (Bradford), Mr. J. F. Greenwood (Haworth), Mr. L. Hainsworth (Farsley), Mr. P. F. Lee (Dewsbury), Mr. Wm. Smith (Morley), Mr. S. P. Unwin (Shipley), Mr. S. E. Wilson (Bradford), Mr. J. J. Stead, Heckmondwike (treasurer), Mr. Butler Wood and Mr. W. T. Field, Bradford (hon. secretaries), Mr. and Mrs. Scatcherd (Morley Hall), and other ladies and gentlemen.

Mr. Yates briefly expressed the thanks of the members of the Society to the Morley Corporation for permitting them to meet in the Town Hall.

The Honorary Secretary Mr. W. T. Field, read the Eighth Annual Report, and Mr. J. J. Stead, the Honorary Treasurer, submitted his Balance Sheet.

The Chairman moved the adoption of the report, and Mr. Wm. Smith, in seconding, said he was pleased to see so many members of the Brontë Society in the ancient town of Morley.

The report having been unanimously adopted, the balance sheet was adopted on the proposition of Mr. J. A. Clapham, and seconded by Mr. W. S. Cameron.

After the re-election of officers and council, some conversation took place on the question of the purchase of Haworth Parsonage. Mr. Unwin said the Parsonage was not ecclesiastical property, but was vested in trustees, and ultimately it might he possible to acquire it on satisfactory terms.

PUBLIC MEETING.

A public meeting was afterwards held, the Mayor of Morley (Councillor C. Scarth) presiding. Mr. Halliwell Sutcliffe, of Bingley, who is well-known for his stories depicting Yorkshire life and character, read a paper on "The Spirit of the Moors;" and Mr. Herbert E. Wroot, of

Bradford also read a paper entitled "Some Brontë Memoranda," in which he laid before the members of the Society the result of researches he had made into a number of obscure facts relating to the novels of Charlotte Brontë. Most of the facts in Mr. Wroot's paper are embodied in the first part of the "Persons and Places of the Brontë Novels," already issued to members, and the remainder will take their places in the next part of that work.

The Mayor was supported by the following ladies and gentlemen in addition to those mentioned above: The Mayoress (Mrs. Scarth), Lady Catherine Milnes Gaskell (Wakefield), the Town Clerk (Mr. R. Borough Hopkins), and Councillor Wm. Middlebrook, J.P.

The Mayor assured the ladies and gentlemen assembled that he was very pleased to be present on such an interesting occasion. This was the first visit that the Society had made to Morley, and in his own name and in the name of the inhabitants of the town whom it was his honour to represent that afternoon he gave the society a very hearty welcome. He hoped the members would take away with them abiding reminiscences not only of the joyfulness but the usefulness of that meeting. Alluding to the paper which was to be read by Mr. Halliwell Sutcliffe, his Worship said that most of them lived and did their work on a lower plane of life, and it was very helpful to be associated with men who in spirit and in mind lived out on the moors and hill-tops of imagination.

Mr. Halliwell Sutcliffe and Mr. H. E. Wroot having read their papers, Mr. R. Borough Hopkins moved a hearty vote of thanks to the readers of the papers. He said he had great pleasure in joining with the Mayor in offering a word of hearty welcome to the members of the Brontë Society on their visit to a town which could claim, at any rate, some indirect association with the Brontë family. Amongst the several reasons why they welcomed the society to Morley was that they were met in a town where commercial interests were strongest; and also because the society was such a *rara avis* as a literary society, as not only to be out of debt, but had a balance in hand. They were pleased to welcome the society, too, on account of its members. In looking over the list of membership they must all be struck in noticing the names of so many who were doing so much good in different parts of Yorkshire. But beyond these reasons they welcomed them because of the high aim and lofty purpose which distinguished the society. He knew of nothing that was more

worthy of support than an effort to encourage careful reading as distinguished from the cursory reading which was so common in these days; and he thought that through the work of that society the appreciation of the writings of the Brontës would increase in future generations as being the product of minds of those living apart from other people, minds which had been taught to think for themselves and to give expression in writing, which modern education was rather inclined to destroy. On these grounds he thought a society such as that was doing a work which they must all admire. He felt he voiced the opinions of everyone in that room when he said how much they were indebted to the readers of the papers which they had just heard read.

Councillor Middlebrook seconded the resolution, and confessed that as one who was born in the midst of the scene of one of the Brontë works he had a great pride in it; and he referred with pleasure to the fact of having heard his mother speak of meeting frequently with Charlotte Brontë when the latter was visiting the Nusseys.

Mrs. Scatcherd, in supporting the resolution, contrived a distant allusion to the Bacon-Shakespeare controversy by observing that the existence of such a Society would make it unlikely that two centuries hence people would be quarrelling as to the authorship of the Brontë novels. She also paid a warm tribute to Mr. Sutcliffe as a delineator of Yorkshire character, especially singling out his story of "Ricroft of Withens."

Mr. Sutcliffe briefly acknowledged the vote of thanks on behalf of himself and Mr. Wroot.

Lady Catherine Milnes Gaskell moved a vote of thanks to the Mayor for the use of the rooms and for presiding, and expressed the pleasure which it had given her to attend the meetings. The great pleasure on such an occasion as that was to bring oneself again in association with great minds.

Mr. Butler Wood seconded, and the resolution was heartily adopted.

The Mayor in reply said he had received his reward in listening to such admirable papers.

The members of the Society and a number of Morley ladies and gentlemen were afterwards entertained to tea in the Banqueting Hall by Mr. and Mrs. Scatcherd. Over one hundred and thirty guests sat down.

Mr. Fred Greenwood (Haworth) proposed and Mr. Unwin seconded a vote of thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Scatcherd.

Mr. Scatcherd in reply said it had been a great pleasure to Mrs. Scatcherd and himself to welcome and entertain the members of the Brontë Society on their first visit to Morley; and they hoped it would not be the last visit which the Society would pay them.

Mrs. Scatcherd also replied, and expressed her pleasure in entertaining their friends that day, which had been a welcome variation to the ordinary commercial life of the town.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MOORS.

An Address delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Brontë Society, by Halliwell Sutcliffe, at Morley, on January 18th, 1902.

It has been well said that when truth left the valleys, it took refuge on the hills. From times of old the hills have been the mothers of conquering sons; from times of old the hills have sheltered every primitive virtue, of loyal love and worthy hate, of mothers' tenderness and fathers' pride; from of old the soldiers of the world have gone down from the hill-tops and have prevailed. This is true of the hills where cattle graze, and sheep clip the springy grass; it is truer still of the moorland spaces where grass is hard in the winning, where ling and rush and bilberry fight hand-to-hand with the acres wrested from the heath.

Consider! Flodden Field—that last decisive, desperate fight—was won by hill-fed thew and sinew of our Craven men. It is the same through history. The race has not been to the swift; the victors have been slow farmer-fellows, who have learned endurance from wind and rain and cutting sleet, who have been taught the exquisite, long lesson of patience under heavy odds. In skill of arms alone the farmer stands supreme—the world's history is his history, and seed and growing blade and harvest-time have been with him, like a benediction, when the ploughshare shaped itself into a pike, and the sickle straightened itself into a broad and hilted sword.

Patience, infinite patience. Toil, infinite toil. Faith beyond the limits of bread, which is oft-times doubtful. These are the moorland virtues. The very ling, the crowberry, the late-budding bracken, show the same tough fibre; the men of the moors, the plants of the moors, are one in spirit and endurance. What would come to the ling and the bracken, if they had no heart to meet the winter storms? What would chance to the moorland

farmers, if they sank, as lesser men would do, beneath the weight of cold in winter, of drought in summer, of peevish autumn storms? Life is a fight to the moor-man always, and for this reason he is staunch in hatred, loyal in love, quick to bear arms against the adversary.

He is no saint, this man of the moors. He is no sinner. He feels the wind in his teeth, and he fights it; and now and then he is answerable for dread deeds, which lesser folk can neither understand nor judge. One knows of midnights—historic now, so far as country tales can make them—when the Squire drank level with the poacher, and battered faces smiled at recollection of some moon-mad prank played long ago. We know of superstitions which set the hair on end when passing lonely heaths. There is the glamour and the terror of the Dog on all the moonlit wastes of heath that lie between Haworth and old Bouldsworth Hill. It is a land of strength, and fear, and witchery.

And yet the voice of grouse and plover, of snipe and moor-fowl, was stronger than man's voice till Emily Brontë came. The outer world knew nothing of the storm and fret of Haworth Moor till "Wuthering Heights" was born. The ling had bloomed in purple glory—the crowberry had ripened its black-purple berries—dawn and sunset had weaved glory from the waste—and none had told the world how sweet these things can be. And then she came, and gave us "Wuthering Heights," and died before the song in her had reached its deepest compass.

These things of the heath are hard to speak about; religion of any type is hard in the telling to one who holds the faith; and to attempt praise of Emily Brontë is to praise the purple of dawn, the gold and red of sunset, the full and satisfying glory of nature in her highest moods. She came at a time when the novel was at last the true expression of mind and soul and heart; she came also at a time when the older traditions still held a dying power, when the green hue of sentimentality sicklied o'er the live passions of bare human nature; yet she knew what she knew, and never once did she waver in the expression of her faith.

Emily Brontë is the Joan of Arc of literature. Joan of Arc had all the trappings of evident romance. She rode in armour to the fray, and, a woman, fought with men in open battle. She is a picture in history such as the populace love; she has the limelight on her always, and it is easy for us all to applaud her heroism. Emily Brontë

had none of these things; she was a pale, great-boned, unhappy girl who shunned her fellows; she had no single outward gift that could appeal to a man's senses; she knew no lover; yet, with it all, she has drawn for us so stupendous a picture of human love, of human hate, of human yearning after the impossible, that men and women, who have known passion, know also that she held passion's secret in her pen. Whence came it? Whence comes the pregnant sap in springtime trees, whence comes the unalterable motherhood of kine, of birds at mating-time, of women in their happiness? None can tell. It is God-given, and that is all we know.

We who have been playmates with the heath, and bedfellows to the whistling winds and rain and winter snow of Haworth Moor, know that the dullest line of "Wuthering Heights" has that deepest interest of all—the interest of naked passion and of naked truth. It is the one book of the world, in that it could not, in a single word, have been written otherwise. It is the one book of the world, in that it shows the moor-life, as it were, reflected in a tarn of crystal clearness. It has no morality, it advocates no creed; its teaching is the teaching of the wind as it sweeps from Lancashire across old Haworth Moor; it is built upon the rock of Nature, who is pitiless and tender, angelic and demoniac, all in the one breath. The world has bowed at the shrine of many conquerors—Cæsar, Alexander, and the rest—but there is one Heathcliff, and one only. Not Alexander at his greatest—when he was sighing for fresh worlds to conquer—could have imagined a hero of Heathcliff's fibre. Not Cleopatra at her softest could have pictured a heroine so tender, so illusive, and so complete, as Cathy. The thing is witchery.

Take Heathcliff from his surroundings, and what have we? A morose, self-centred savage, who loves his fleshly idol with a passion scarcely decent. But set Heathcliff in the midst of bog and heath and waving bracken, and he's a man framed after the likeness of a god. He knows no law, save of the wind and the whistling plover; he knows no obstacle to love, save of the woman's heart; he is complete, a man in the swiftness and the surety of his passions—and yet a superhuman creature, in that he is never less than himself, never false by word or deed to the past that lies behind him, to the fate that lies ahead.

Indeed, it is this completeness of each character in the book that makes "Wuthering Heights" a masterpiece of art. The natural truth—of scene-drawing and of the play

of passion—alone would have held us spellbound; but by its art—a delicacy of art surprising in so rough a tale—it claims our quieter love upon a second—nay, a twentieth reading. The very looseness of the narrative, the casual coming of a stranger to the moors, and his interrupted sittings with the teller of the tale, all help to conceal the steady handling of a story such as no brain but Emily Brontë's could have conceived, such as no pen but hers could have set down. It is not Heathcliff only who satisfies us; it is not Cathy only; it is each actor in this moorside drama, whether a farm hind or a nurse, a Squire of the valley-lands, or a hulking ploughboy of the uplands. Joseph, Pharisee, farm-hand, and misanthrope, who thrives on a sort of rough-edged joy in his own righteousness and in the sins of other folk, is as much a bit of Haworth Moor as the rocks that underlie its heather and the sleeting wind that whistles from the wastes of Stanbury. Nellie the nurse, a little prim, a little hard in the shell and vastly soft in the kernel, full of housewife's maxims and the bustling, tart satisfaction with things as they are, which distinguishes the woman of her hands—she, too, is ready at this day to greet you and to brew a cup of tea for you in that happy, storm-swept land which lies between the edge of Yorkshire and the edge of Lancashire.

And what of Cathy? Ah, there's the south-west wind about her! The south-west wind, that comes in summer down the wooded denes and clefts of our grim moorland, the wind that has the softness of the flowering ling about it, the bitter-sweet of peat and bogland, the nameless scents that are born every year, clean, sharp and fragrant, when the moorland flowers awake, and the primrose blows in sheltered hollows, and every mistal, shouldering green fields, gives out its witching odour of the kine. She is just this, the heroine of "Wuthering Heights," and we might as well criticise the wind of summer as take her character to pieces, bit by bit, as is our modern fashion, and set a price upon each word and action. Like Heathcliff, she is above praise or censure; her will is the will of the moor-top and the sky, and we are satisfied. We are more; we are enamoured, and "Wuthering Heights" is at war with womankind in that we dare not, in our ideal of her sex, stoop lower than this Cathy, with her strange eeriness and stranger warmth of breathing flesh and blood, with her perverseness that is sinless and her passion that is strained—as it were, through gossamer threads of fairy-weaving—until it seems, not passion, but

clear water from the well which is needed to dilute the rough-edged wine of Heathcliff's frenzy. She is a woman to make men lightly sell their birthright—and sell it with a laugh upon their lips. All feeling comes back ultimately to odours, and Cathy is to us what lavender is at flowering time, what rosemary is, with all its sweetness of remembrance, what wild-roses are when they flower between the drooping tendrils of the honeysuckle.

Perhaps she is the truest note in all the book, as possibly the short-lived summer of the uplands is the interpreter of storms that have gone before, of tempests that will surely follow. Amid the roughness, the violence, the blows and oaths and hardships of the tale, as we get these brief, ensnaring glimpses of the girl, as we hear the pulse of Heathcliff beat high and strong, and see the love-look in his gipsy eyes, we are aware of sunshine and the scent of hay.

Heathcliff, for his part, was not born of the moors, and in this, too, there is a strange surety of instinct. Had he been moor-born, he would have been tied by old tradition; as it was, he came, a nameless waif picked up in Liverpool, and ran wild about the heath with no responsibility to forbears or to family pride. How that picture of his coming to the Heights lives with us! A swarthy slip of Pagandom, brought home on a dark night beneath the master's cloak. Even at this first moment of our seeing him, we feel the tragedy of after-years loom mistily ahead; from the first he is at war with all upon the moor, except little Cathy and the doting master; from the first he is acquiescent under ill-treatment, so long as he wins his point at last; from the first, too, he takes up the thread of that passion for Catherine Earnshaw which is to grow to bitter fruit one day. He grows from inch to inch—good bone and muscle, all of it—and lives upon the moors, and sucks the meaning of the wind and storm as other lads suck lollipops. Nothing affrights him, except grace and gentleness; when he and Cathy roam down to Linton Manor—a well-matched pair of fly-by-nights—and the dog fixes its curved teeth in the girl's ankle, he is afraid, lad as he is, only for her pain, and tries, with a cool eye for ways and means which older men might envy, to force open the foam-licked jaws with the nearest lump of rock. When he is beaten, bruised by the master's jealous son, he never whimpers—nor forgets. He is daunted only when Cathy —little Cathy, who had been his guardian angel and his scapegrace playmate—comes back after a five-weeks' visit

to the Lintons, all dainty in her frippery, and minded to play the great lady as only a child can play it. Then, for the first time, Heathcliff is afraid, as a man is afraid of crushing a flower beneath his thick, nailed boots; for the first time he is jealous, with a premonition that she will nevermore be to him what she has been. The rift grows wider. On one side is the girl, dainty, generous, headstrong; on the other is the lad, who has never learned that even flower-like lassies are to be won by long endurance. He is as the wind and God's moorland made him; so long as he is free to blow whither he listeth, he is musical and gay; but, soon as he is thwarted, his note turns to sullen wildness, as of tempest beating on thick, hill-top walls. Wider the rift grows and wider; he sees the gentler folk from the valleys come mincing and smirking into that grim house of Wuthering Heights which asked for sterner visitors; he sees his Cathy grow daily fonder of soft speeches, and soft clothing, and soft ways; small wonder that he fled into that dismal prison-house called "Self," and showed the sullen bars of hate to all intruders, even to Cathy of the flower-like face and dancing heart

Our love for Heathcliff would have gone had he done otherwise. The girl loved him—yes, even in those days she loved him!—and she played with her love as women will play with apple-bloom in Spring, forgetful that they are robbing earth of her just harvest. Because her love was in blossom only, not in fruit, she chose to play with it; and afterwards the dead petals showered about her, and she wondered, all in a maid's way, who had shaken the branches of that Tree of Love. And Heathcliff, meanwhile—blunt, a man—did not ask whether this were sport or earnest; all things were earnest to him—blows, and winter snow, and promise of the harvest—and he thought that Cathy was forgetting. He had a right to think so; and there was none at Wuthering Heights well-versed enough in trickery to tell him of the gulf that lies between what a woman feels and what she shows. His misery turned inward, like a malignant growth; he must have all or nothing—so much the moors had taught this gipsy—and, since he had lost some of Cathy, he would forfeit all that lay between herself and him. He ceased to wash—he did not speak when company was forced upon him—he did not trouble to un-arch his sullen, gipsy brows, nor to let his heart speak out of the dark, gipsy eyes. And most of all he showed those outward signs of inward misery when Cathy, mistress of his fate, was near. And she, who had learned no lesson such

as Eve learned after her girlhood was over and done with, must flout him for a boor. And so the gulf widened, deepened, and Edgar Linton—a toy-terrier of a man—came walking down her side of the valley.

She married Linton It was inevitable, predestined. And she repented; that, too, was predestined and inevitable. No throstle in its wicker cage was ever wilder with its wings against the bars than Catherine Linton when she learned what wedded life must be henceforward. She had known the winds and the rains, even as Heathcliff had known them; she had lived with men, who, it is true, swore hard upon occasion, but who understood what is written upon the naked heart of life; and yet she was mated with one who, if he had gentler manners, had also a vastly tender skin Heathcliff—her woman's instinct told her that—had loved her with a man's passion; her husband loved her as a petted spaniel loves its mistress.

And so a second rift grew wide and wider, and surely the wife was not to blame. Linton should have mated in the valleys; he had no place with such as Catherine. True, he came out in braver colours later, but over-late to convince us; and that, too, is a triumph of character-drawing, for the author never meant that we should see any mate but Heathcliff for Catherine of the Heights. Like the wind, his only tutor, Heathcliff disappears after Cathy's marriage; like the wind he reappears, and woos the sister of his rival; like the wind that riots in the autumn, he overthrows well-garnered stacks, and while he woos the sister of his enemy, he snatches a wild meeting from his enemy's wife—from Cathy, who was his by all laws of fellowship and love—and leaves poor Edgar Linton, with a flicker of late-found bravery, to marshall his gardener and his stable-boys in battle array. And through it all the author's mind is clear—she knows that Heathcliff was robbed of his mate, and she deals out the punishment, even as fate deals out its punishment, to innocent and guilty. Never, perhaps, in any book has there been less regard for obvious and untrue conclusions; there is no moralising, no appeal to blind maxims and blinder powers of vengeance, because Heathcliff comes to claim his own; the facts are stated—facts inevitable as the storms that lay the hard won harvest low—and we are left to gather in our fingers the threads of a story inevitable, true, and therefore just. What temptation would have beset a writer of weaker fibre to point, at this juncture, a moral so trite as to be wearisome! The toy terrier of a husband might have

been set in a frame of martyrdom, and all his weakness forgotten amid a lurid tale of all his wrongs and all poor Heathcliff's villanies. But Emily Brontë is above such meannesses ; she tells what is, and in her heart, as we have said. she knows that Heathcliff is the worthier man. As for Cathy—unhappy, ill-mated, full of bodily weakness and aware of a new life in her, a life that is not hers and Heathcliff's, but hers and Linton's—Cathy knows not what to say when her gipsy-lover comes and shatters, with a single kiss, the mockery of wedded life which she has scarcely attempted to render real. Cathy knows not what to say; women rarely do if there is anything at stake ; but what she feels is rendered clear by a hundred subtle touches.

Oh, it is wrong, according to straight lines and maxims ordered like a figure of geometry! Yet she had as little power to help her gladness as the thrush has, when for a moment it sees its cage door opened and feels the singing wind of heaven come beating in. Heathcliff was hers, and she was his ; they had wedded long ago, with the hill-tops for their church, with laverock, grouse, and plover for their choir ; and no haphazard marriage of the flesh could alter that.

Mark the clean way of it. This scene with Heathcliff, who comes to supplant the lawful husband ; there's never a touch of squalor or of sin in it; it is no vulgar intrigue between a woman tired of constancy and a man who preys upon his neighbour's property; it is a scene of natural tempest, of unavoidable, clean storm, as when the clouds, full-charged with lightning, and weary, like the kine at milking-time for easing of their burden, break out in rain and shattered tempest-wrack. The man and the woman do not halt to ask if they love each other; as well might they question the number of their limbs, or the knowledge that they lived.

This one scene is the triumph and the key-note of the book ; and after it is done, after Heathcliff has vanished, gipsy-like, into the larger spaces of the moor, after Cathy lies down upon a narrow bed and courts delirium, we realise the wonder and the witchery of this passion which is truth. Cathy has lost what little sense of worldly prudence she has known ; she lies there in her weakness, and her heart is given to us, naked, plain to be read. And over that suffering, wilful, madly-beating heart, there is written, across and across, the one name Heathcliff. When she remembers her husband, she despises and is

weary of him; and again she goes over well-remembered scenes that she and Heathcliff have lived through together. What they dreamed, of fairies and of hobgoblins on Penistone Crag; how they had listened to the wind as it blew through the stark old house of Wuthering Heights; little snatches of moor-lore, learned long ago in company with her mate.

Perhaps none but a moor-man can understand the feeling that one passage from this drama always wakes in one. It is after Cathy has lain long abed, fasting and fevered; she takes the pillow between her little teeth and tears it into shreds—but the scene cannot be described in any other words but Emily Brontë's.

'Tossing about, she increased her feverish bewilderment to madness, and tore the pillow with her teeth; then raising herself up all burning, desired that I would open the window. We were in the middle of winter, the wind blew strong from the north-east, and I objected.

'Both the expressions flitting over her face, and the changes of her moods, began to alarm me terribly; and brought to my recollection her former illness, and the doctor's injunction that she should not be crossed.

'A minute previously she was violent: now, supported on one arm, and not noticing my refusal to obey her, she seemed to find childish diversion in pulling the feathers from the rents she had just made, and ranging them on the sheet according to their different species: her mind had strayed to other associations.

'"That's a turkey's," she murmured to herself; "and this is a wild duck's; and this is a pigeon's. Ah, they put pigeons' feathers in the pillows—no wonder I couldn't die! Let me take care to throw it on the floor when I lie down. And here is a moorcock's; and this—I should know it among a thousand—it's a lapwing's. Bonny bird; wheeling over our heads in the middle of the moor. It wanted to get to its nest, for the clouds touched the swells, and it felt rain coming. This feather was picked up from the heath, the bird was not shot—we saw its nest in the winter, full of little skeletons. Heathcliff set a trap over it, and the old ones dare not come. I made him promise he'd never shoot a lapwing after that, and he did'nt. Yes, here are more! Did he shoot my lapwings, Nelly? Are they red, any of them? Let me look."

'"Give over with that baby-work!" I interrupted, dragging the pillow away, and turning the holes towards

the mattress, for she was removing its contents by handfuls. "Lie down and shut your eyes; you're wandering. There's a mess! The down is flying about like snow."'

That gives us all the past in half-a-dozen lines. The latent cruelty of Heathcliff, the power of Cathy over his cruelty, the intimate, deep knowledge of the moors they shared—all are brought before us as the scent of heather brings back forgotten scenes, forgotten hopes, forgotten lessons taught us by our mother, Nature. That mention of the lapwing—it is almost weird in its very fitness, like the keystone of a graceful arch. The peewit is a well-nigh sacred bird to the moor-folk, for it voices their own feelings; and Heathcliff, untrammelled by tradition, is restrained in cruelty by the voice of one who has learned, from the far-off fathers, the sanctity of the shrill-piping lapwing.

What is the charm this heath-born girl holds in her pen-point? She cannot go astray; whether she pictures the strength of passion, the weakness of glad self-surrender, the least first signs of springtime or of storm upon the heath, she always satisfies. She knows, and she is true to knowledge; she gives us all the things that are, and passes by the things that valley-folk count worthy, with a courage scarcely human.

They tell us Emily Brontë never mixed with her fellows. Her own sister gravely states that she knew as little of the world's life as a nun knows of the folk who pass her convent gate. Yet they forget that smoke betokens fire, that "Wuthering Heights" could never have been written by one who did not know the secret places and the secret passions of the moor; they forget, too, that Emily Brontë, even in death, was solitary, reliant, and alone. Her own family—they have confessed it—feared to skirt the fence that she had raised between herself and her own class; yet they did not guess that she sought her own companionship in her own way, and that the farmer-folk of Haworth were more to her than all the genteel wordlings who gather round a Parsonage. She did not care for parochial life; the buzz of scandal, the clatter of tea-cups, all the polite instruments that we have devised for destroying our neighbours' happiness and our own, had neither interest nor attraction for her. She was silent, unapproachable, amid such matters; but, once her feet were set upon that narrow and that lone green way which led toward the heath, she was herself. Proof, beyond the

pages of "Wuthering Heights," is not needed to convince us that she knew, as a native knows it, that wilder world of ling, and peat, and marsh, and lone farm-steading, which lies beyond and above the world of little folk. Her dialect alone is witness to her knowledge; it is true to the old folk-speech of Haworth and Stanbury Moor, in the days before steam and all its million evils came to undo the primitive, straight honesty of the hillmen. Her knowledge of the springs of thought is true. Her instinct of the things that matter, as apart from the things that serve to pass an idle hour, is direct as a North wind blowing over winter snow.

It is part of fate's humour that truth should be late-born; it is part of fate's humour that Charlotte Brontë should have written, almost wholly in apology, her preface to "Wuthering Heights." The 'prentice hand pleaded for leniency toward his master's work, and what was written in flame and smoke of a soul's travail was sent out to the world with a fore-word written by one who, great in her own way, had yet no intimacy with the deeper springs of life, of passion and of destiny.

The book itself, by grace of fortune, is still with us. The spirit of the moors is still with us, though, like the Covenanters of old, it hides among the highest hill-tops. Perhaps it would be well to finish here, with these as our last words; yet somehow there is something left still to be said of "Wuthering Heights"—and something, too, of that hapless brother of Emily Brontë's who has found few kindly judges in the world.

Again the book must speak for itself, as a weaker page cannot speak. Soon after the crucial scene with Heathcliff, soon after those wild memories of days gone by, we find Edgar Linton in his wife's chamber.

'At first she gave him no glance of recognition; he was invisible to her abstracted gaze.

'The delirium was not fixed, however; having weaned her eyes from contemplating the outer darkness, by degrees she centred her attention on him, and discovered who it was that held her.

'"Ah! you are come, are you, Edgar Linton?" she said with angry animation. "You are one of those things which are ever found when least wanted, and when you are wanted, never! I suppose we shall have plenty of lamentations now—I see we shall—but they can't keep me from my narrow home out yonder: my resting-place, where I'm

bound before Spring is over! There it is: not among the Lintons, mind, under the chapel roof, but in the open air with a headstone; and you may please yourself whether you go to them or come to me!"

'"Catherine, what have you done?" commenced the master. "Am I nothing to you any more? Do you love that wretch Heath——"

'"Hush!" cried Mrs. Linton. "Hush, this moment! You mention that name and I end the matter instantly, by a spring from the window! What you touch at present you may have; but my soul will be on that hill-top before you lay hands on me again. I don't want you, Edgar: I'm past wanting you."'

Again the true note is struck. "What you touch at present you may have; but my soul will be on that hill-top before you lay your hands on me again!" There we have the expression of wifely duty—of bodily duty, that is, because she had never had more to promise Edgar Linton. There we have the yearning for the hill-tops, always the heathery, curlew-haunted hill-tops. There, too, we have that choice of burial ground which afterwards, and in a cruder fashion, was to mark the last moments of Heathcliff. Even in death they were not divided, so far as the soul and aching heart went; and their marriage, so far as this world went, was to be consummated up yonder on the heights, when clay met clay against the riven coffin boards. Ah, surely this was love—love of the old fashion, that dreaded neither storm nor charnel-house. We have grown too weak for such strong meat perhaps; yet surely the dullest ears can hear the music of it, and the truth. As well deny the wind's power, or the sun's; this love of Catherine and Heathcliff falls upon us, note by note, with a persuasion which is neither man's nor woman's, but which belongs to the singing wind, and the big, wild voice of a Nature who will have her way.

If Nature did not lead Emily Brontë—nay, rather go hand in hand with her—who did? Follow the after-plot of "Wuthering Heights," and mark its conclusion, inevitable, satisfying. Cathy dies, and henceforth there is the one big figure in the book—the figure of Heathcliff, who remembers—remembers, as better men forget. There is no second love for him; there could be none; and again it is inevitable that he should grow soured beyond belief, savage beyond conception, when all that spells the world to him is gone. His gaze is upon this world, not upon the

promise of the next; lose Cathy in the flesh, and he loses her for ever, is Heathcliff's guiding thought; and again he snarls, and growls, and curses, just as the North wind does between the bleak wall-crevices of Haworth Moor.

Yet in Heathcliff, too, there is that stuff of soul which ranges out beyond the coffin, the mould, the blind worm that hides beneath the sod. We are all of us, just now and then, a little greater than the flesh that hems us in; and Heathcliff, stronger to the last than we poor folk can be, is greatest at the moment of his death.

We will not pry upon those final scenes; we will not dissect them, nor profane; enough that, amid such gruesome odours of the coffin and the flesh dissolving into earth, we still hear that clear, triumphant note which Cathy sounded long ago. Their souls are on the hill tops still—hers and Heathcliff's—while Linton's crouches in the valley-lands, away out of sight of the woman he married, of the lover he had robbed of his true mate. Again and again, in these last scenes, there is that weird insistence of the spiritual, that plain, unswerving treatment of the flesh which is our prison-house. Heathcliff—Heathcliff the morose, the cruel, the Ishmael among his kind—confesses to his faith in ghosts. So does every man who has walked lonely on the lonely heath, who has felt the fret of spirit underlying the palpable, cold bluster of the storm. Heathcliff has faith in ghosts; he has faith that spirits stalk this cruder earth; above all, he has faith that souls can marry, though bodies have been long kept asunder. He dies, and is laid to rest, with the gorse and the waving bracken and the tough, sweet-scented hay above him, beside the body of his mate. And so this book of gloom and tragedy ends happily; it ends, as the world of heath revolves beneath the stars, inevitably; it ends with a sense of the world's injustice, and the hope of recompense; and our hearts go out in yearning for the happiness of Heathcliff the misunderstood, and of Cathy, who is the daintiest heroine of fiction or of fact.

A lesser artist would have stayed here, content with her own triumph. But Emily Brontë goes further. She has finished her book; and, yet, by quiet and quieter movements of her music she leads us into that atmosphere of peace in which she knows her favourites—Heathcliff and Cathy—must rest. Again we are compelled to reverence, not the conception alone, not the development alone, of "Wuthering Heights," but the sure courage that will not stoop to end where recognised laws say "end"—which

goes forward to the true, inevitable finish. Lower and lower sounds the music; gentler and gentler grows the voice of that wild tempest which has wrecked the peace of Haworth Moor; till, at the last, we have a passage that is but a whisper of the summer breeze among the bells of heath.

"I lingered————"

So the book ends, and there's never a word too much, never a word too little, in the whole of it.

Emily Brontë! What is there more to say of her? The bravest and the sweetest soul that ever saw the truth and wrote it down. She is neither man nor woman; a woman could never have conceived the book, a man could never have wrought such subtle lines of tenderness, and truth, and purity, as she has done. Like Heathcliff himself, she is above and beyond us; she is a creature of the moors, a foster-daughter, as it were, of Nature; and hers are the secrets that running waters murmur as they wash their peaty banks—the secrets that the lapwing shares—the secrets of things old and unalterable, hidden deep beneath the outer fret and struggle of what we call the world of progress.

She must, we are sure, have kept always a warm heart for her brother Branwell. She was not one to blame lightly, for she had watched the hill-top thorn grow crooked under stress of western gales, and she understood, as few can understand, the great primeval forces that shape both trees and men into the final mould. Talent this unhappy lad possessed; it may be genius; but he was cursed by waywardness, and drifted, like one lacking oars and rudder, across the waters of his days—drifted, and left a ripple here and there to mark his going, and vanished into silence. Yet he, too, has his place as a foundation-stone of all his sister's work. It was Emily's part to be steadfast, to suffer and be strong; it was Branwell's to riot and be weak; yet had there been no Branwell Brontë, to give a human meaning to the wild traditions, the wilder stories, on which his sister fed, there had been no "Wuthering Heights." Branwell is dead, and the time to judge his faults is past; unhappy, sinning, seeking he knew not what by tangled and by miry paths, his memory has still for us some magic, some touch of spoiled romance. Nor was his life in vain; for out of his very sins and follies his sister made more threads than one, from which to weave the finished piece called "Wuthering Heights."

And now to finish. To say in a word what defies the

intrusion of any spoken word. To talk of that "Spirit of the Moors" which is strong as rock, yet airy as a dream. It is a little corner of the world, this heath that lies between Wycoller and Oxenhope, between Haworth and old Hebden Brigg; yet somehow it is the touchstone of all romance, and spaciousness, and glamour. Never a swart farm-bigging, shouldering the lonely hill-top, but has its story; never a wrinkled slope of pasture but knows a Saga-tale, of hunters who hunted the forbidden hare, of keepers who came to fight, of battles that were fierce, and fair, and truculent; never a sheltered dene but smiles at memories of lad and lass, and the ways and songs of mating times long-dead. Out yonder is Wycoller Dene, whither the wooers used to walk, once upon a day, from distant Oxenhope, for the Dene was full of bonnie maids as a winter thorn is full of haws; and in Wycoller, we have as much of legend as would fill a country-side in any land less favoured than our Craven. The Cunliffes who lived, and feasted, and were merry in that dismantled hall—the Cunliffe who lay a-dying, and ordered his favourite pair of fighting-cocks to be brought to the bed-foot, and died cheering on the winning bird—that other far-off Cunliffe who rides on the West wind of stormy nights, rides, a ghost on a ghostly horse, all down the Dene, and between the guardian hollies of the doorway, and up the stone steps into the bedroom of the wife he loved and wronged and killed three centuries ago or so. These things are from of old, and from of old the wind brings back to us, as we stand beside Wycoller's stream, the fragrance and the strength of happier days. The violets blew softer then, the primroses looked outward from their nooks with a deeper and more wistful look in their great eyes; the blood ran redder in men's veins, for love or hate, and women were as full of panting life as thorn-set roses are when the sun is in their hearts. Forgotten now, as a dead man out of mind, is old Wycoller Dene; so much the better, for we have time—as love has time among the ruins—to sit and dream, and let that old-time madness of the blood rise once again and take us captive. The crowded ways of men—the street's confusion, the statesman's harvest of clapping hands, the hard-won ease of houses bigger than our needs—all these are blown away like smoke by the winds of Wycoller, and our eyes are opened, and we know. Winter, or pride of summer, all is one. There is never a day so stark, so sleety, or so dread, in Wycoller Dene, but has its steady sunshine—the sunshine

of Romance, who is man's best friend on earth.

Yet we can leave Wycoller, and go east across the pathless moor, and yet have witchery with us like a constant friend. Here the moor-fowl nested yester-year, and there the bog has tales of death to tell, if it could but open its dumb, greedy mouth; up yonder, where the heather hugs the sky, there was treasure hid when Prince Charlie came marching west of Pendle Hill, and when the Stanbury folk were doubtful lest he and his Hielandmen should come nearer still. Yonder again, where the sunset flames, and pales, and flames again, there is the dreary tavern whence a man went outward to his death, the murderers stealing shadow-like behind him. Here the old Squire fought with his own keepers, and worsted them for sport; down in the hollow there, where oak-fern trembles in the breeze, there was a great and tender passion brought to ripeness; in yonder strip of intake, hard won from the heath, a man worked lonely, worked eagerly, worked till he dropped in his own paces, faithful to the labour he had set himself. See the deep cleft there, hidden by its beard of ling and bilberry; go back a space of fifty years or so, and count the poachers as they come—ten, twenty, thirty—grim-visaged men and dour, who march together, their will the wind's will, to forage where they list. The Squire has keepers—true, but over-few to match these stalwart enemies of written law. The Squire, the Parson, and the Lawyer may drink their wine below there in the sheltered valley-lands; but the poachers are the magistrates on Haworth Moor, and the unwritten law they follow says that all which flies, or swims, or runs upon four legs, is any man's to take.

Watch them go up and up, their dogs beside them. Watch the last flicker of the dying moon light up their swarthy faces. Then let the stillness fall, the starshine and the silence, broken only by the bark of farmers' dogs, the fretful protest of the grouse. Sit down awhile upon a clump of ling—the season of the year is dry enough—and let the past and present mingle, with the reek of hay and mistal-sweets to help the reverie.

About you, where you sit, is Haworth Moor, ripe-rich in story before the Brontës knew it. About you are the old, unconquerable tales, the old, unconquerable roughness of the heath; and truth, like a wistful, homeless maid, sits hand in-hand with you. Yet about you, as you sit, there is the nearer presence of the Brontës. Visions come and go upon the smooth night-wind—of Emily striving to endure, and to perfect her masterpiece—of the old father,

querulous amid the genius he has begotten—of Branwell, escaping from the tavern window with a skin too full of wine and foolishness.

It is enough. Let the dreams die down, and hearken to the lowing of the kine, and sup the satisfying fragrance of the mistals and the heath. This is Haworth Moor, and until time is not, and the world is crumpled into primeval space, the moor-born heart will neither waver nor forget.

Listen again, now that the peevish wind gets up to scatter peace. What is the cry that comes across the bracken and the ling? It is the cry of Cathy, beating with frail hands against the window-bars. "I want to come in. I'm come home. I lost my way on the moor. Let me come in!"

Louder the wind grows, and louder still. It is Heathcliff's voice. He is lying prone in the little chamber, sobbing his heart out, and crying on the ghost that once was flesh and blood.

Again the wind dies down. And from a neighbouring mistal comes the honey-hearted scent of kine.

BRONTË SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS.

PART XIV.

TRANSACTIONS:

CONTAINING

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

AT DEWSBURY AND KEIGHLEY,

AND

PAPERS READ BEFORE THE SOCIETY.

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NOTE.

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NINTH
ANNUAL MEETING OF THE BRONTË SOCIETY.

THE Ninth Annual Meeting of the Society was held at Dewsbury, March 28th, 1903, in the Town Hall.

The business meeting took place in the afternoon, under the presidency of the Chairman of the Council, Mr. S. P. Unwin. The Annual Report was read by the Hon. Secretary, Mr. W. T. Field, and the Balance Sheet was presented. These were adopted upon the motion of Mr. W. W. Yates, and seconded by Mr. J. Caldwell. On the motion of Mr. R. Denby, seconded by Mr. G. Day, the retiring members of the Council, Mr. W. Smith, Mr. Halliwell Sutcliffe, Mr. S. P. Unwin, Mr. W. Taylor, Mr. J. Caldwell, Mr. W. Robertshaw, and Mr. L. Hainsworth were re-elected. The Auditors, Messrs. J. A. Clapham and M. E. Hartley, were also re-elected. On the motion of Mr. F. Mossman, and the Rev. T. Shawcross, a vote of thanks was accorded to the Mayor of Dewsbury for granting the Society permission to use the Town Hall. Tea was provided in the large Banqueting Hall.

PUBLIC MEETING.

In the evening a public meeting was held, Mr. S. P. Unwin presiding. Mr. Edmund Gosse, M.A., LL.D., delivered an address, entitled, "The Challenge of the Brontës," before a large audience. At the conclusion of the meeting, the Vicar of Dewsbury, Rev. R. C. M. Harvey, proposed a vote of thanks to Mr. Gosse. This was seconded by Rev. M. Anstey, supported by Mrs. Scatcherd, and carried unanimously.

THE CHALLENGE OF THE BRONTËS.

An Address delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Brontë Society, at Dewsbury, Mar. 28th, 1903, by Mr. Edmund Gosse, M.A., LL.D., of London.

Although I possess in no degree the advantage which so many of the members of your Society enjoy in being personally connected with the scenes and even, perhaps, with the characters associated with the Brontë family, I cannot begin my little address to you to-day without some

invocation of the genius of the place. We meet at Dewsbury because the immortal sisters were identified with Dewsbury. Is it then not imperative that for whatever picture of them I may endeavour to present before you this afternoon, Dewsbury should form the background? Unfortunately, however, although in the hands of a skilful painter the figures of the ladies may glow forth, I fear that in the matter of taking Dewsbury as the background some vagueness and some darkness are inevitable. In the biographies of Mrs. Gaskell and of Mr. Clement Shorter, as well as in the proceedings of your Society, I have searched for evidences of the place Dewsbury took in the lives of the Brontës. What I find—I expect you to tell me that it is not exhaustive—is this: Their father, the Reverend Patrick Brontë, was curate here from 1809 to 1811. In 1836, when Charlotte was twenty, Miss Wooler transferred her school from Roe Head to Heald's House, at the top of Dewsbury Moor. In this school, where Charlotte had been a pupil since 1831, she was now governess, and a governess she remained until early in 1838. In April of that year Miss Wooler was taken ill and Charlotte was for a little while in charge. Then there was an explosion of temper, of some kind, and Charlotte went back to Haworth.

That, then, is in the main what the scrupulous muse of history vouchsafes to tell us about Charlotte Brontë's relation to Dewsbury. But it also supplies us with one or two phrases which I cannot bring myself to spare you. In January 1838, Charlotte reviews her experience at Dewsbury Moor; "I feel," she says, "in nothing better, nothing humbler nor purer." Again in 1841, after there had passed time enough to mellow her exacerbations, she continues to express herself with vigour. Miss Wooler is making overtures to Charlotte and Emily to take over the school at Heald's House; perhaps a place might be found for Anne as well. Miss Wooler, one of the kindest of women, is most thoughtful, most conciliatory. Charlotte will have none of the idea; she puts it roughly from her. Of Dewsbury she has nothing to say but that "It is a poisoned place for me." This is all we know of Charlotte's relation to Dewsbury, yet nothing, you will tell me in Froude's phrase, to what the angels know. Well, I must be frank with you and say that I am afraid the angels have been inclined to record exceedingly little of Charlotte Brontë's residence in your inoffensive neighbourhood. I have to paint a back-ground to my picture, and I find none but the gloomiest colours. They have to be what

the art-critics of the eighteenth century called sub-fusc. But it is not the fault of Dewsbury, it is the fault, or the misfortune, of our remarkable little genius. She was here, in this wholesome and hospitable vicinity, for several months, during which time she "felt in nothing better, neither humbler nor purer," and looking back upon it, she had to admit that it was "a poisoned place" to her.

I cannot help fancying that you will agree with me, that on such an occasion as the present, and especially when dealing with a group of writers about whom so much has been said as about the Brontës, it is wise not to cover too wide a ground, but to take, and keep to, one aspect of the subject. Our little excursion into the history seems to have given us, under the heading "Dewsbury", a rather grim text from which, nevertheless, we may perhaps extract some final consolation. Let me say at the outset that for the grimness, for the harshness, Dewsbury is not at all to blame. I fancy that if, in the years from 1836 to 1838, the Brontë girls had been visitors to Kubla Khan, and had been fed on honey by his myrmidons at Xanadu, that pleasure-dome would yet have been "poisoned" to them. It was not poverty and cold and the disagreeable position of a governess, it was not the rough landscape of your moors, nor its lack of southern amenity, which made Charlotte wretched here. It was not in good Miss Wooler, nor in the pupils, nor in the visitors at Heald's House that the mischief lay, it was in the closed and patient crater of Charlotte's own bosom. And I am almost persuaded that, if you had lived in Dewsbury sixty-five years ago, you would have heard on very quiet days a faint subterranean sound which you would never have been able to guess was really the passion, furiously panting, shut up in the heart of a small, pale governess in Heald's House schoolroom.

If you accuse me of fatalism, I am helpless in your hands, for I confess, I do not see how it could be otherwise, and do scarcely wish that it could have been. Let us not be too sentimental in this matter. Figures in literature are useful and valuable to us for what they give us. The more personal and intense and definite that is, the greater the gift. But, the greater the gift, the more strenuous the toil and the more severe the initiation which lead to its expression. The Brontës had a certain thing to learn to give; what that was we shall presently try to note. But whatever we find it to be, we start with allowing that it was extremely and boldly original. It was not to be mastered by lying upon padded sofas and toying with a little Berlin

wool-work. It involved pain, resistance, a stern revision of things hitherto taken for granted. The secrets which they designed to wring from nature and from life were not likely to be revealed to the self-indulgent and the dilettante. The sisters had a message from the sphere of indignation and revolt. In order that they should learn it as well as teach it, it was necessary that they should arrive on the scene at an evil hour for their own happiness. "Jane Eyre" and "Shirley" and "Villette" could not have been written unless, for long years, the world had been "a poisoned place" for Charlotte Brontë.

It has been excellently said by Mrs. Humphry Ward that in many respects, and to the very last, the Brontës challenge no less than they attract us. This is an aspect which, in the midst of our rapturous modern heroine-worship, we are apt to forget. Thackeray, who respected the genius of the family, and was immensely kind to the author of "Jane Eyre," never really felt comfortable in her company. We know how he stole out of his own front door, and slipped away into the night to escape her. "A very austere little person," he called her, and we may put what emphasis on the austerity we will. I feel sure that any maladroit "whitewashing of Charlotte" will end, sooner or later, good natured as it may be, in a failure to comprehend what she really was, what her merit consisted in, what the element in her was that, for instance, calls us here together nearly half a century after she completed her work and passed away. Young persons of genius very commonly write depressing books; since, the more vivid an unripe creature's impression of life is, the more acute is its distress. It is only very stupid Sunday school children who shout in chorus "We are so happy, happy, happy!" Genius thrown naked, with exposed nerves, on a hard indifferent world, is never "happy" at first. Earth is a "poisoned place" to it, until it has won its way and woven its garments and discovered its food.

But in the case of Charlotte Brontë, unhappiness was more than juvenile fretfulness. All her career was a revolt against conventionality, against isolation, against irresistible natural forces such as climate and ill-health and physical insignificance. Would this insubmissive spirit have passed out of her writings, as it passed for instance, out of those of George Sand? I am not sure, for we see it as strongly, though more gracefully and skilfully expressed, in "Villette" as in the early letters which her biographers have printed. Her hatred of what was

commonplace and narrow and obvious flung her against a wall of prejudice which she could not break down. She could only point to it by her exhausting efforts; she could only invite the generation which succeeded her to bring their pickaxes to bear upon it. Hence, to the very last, she seems, more than any other figure in our literature, to be for ever ruffled in temper, for ever angry and wounded and indignant, rejecting consolation, crouched like a sick animal in the cavern of her own quenchless pride. This is not an amiable attitude, nor is it historically true that this was Charlotte Brontë's constant aspect. But I will venture to say that her amiabilities, her yielding moods, are really the unessential parts of her disposition, and that a certain admirable ferocity is the notable feature of her intellectual character.

Her great heart was always bleeding. Here at Dewsbury, in the years we are contemplating, the hemorrhage was of the most doleful kind, for it was concealed, suppressed, an inward flow. When once she became an author the pain of her soul was relieved. She said, in 1850, looking back on the publication of the hapless first volume of poems, "the mere effort to succeed gave a wonderful zest to existence." Then, a little later, when no one had paid the slightest attention to the slender trio of maiden voices, "Something like a chill of despair began to invade their hearts." With a less powerful inspiration, they must have ceased to make the effort, they must have succumbed in a melancholy oblivion. But they were saved by the instinct of a mission. It was not their private grief which primarily stirred them. What urged them on was the dim consciousness that they gave voice to a dumb sense of the suffering of all the world. They had to go on working; they had to pursue their course, though it might seem sinister or fatal their business was to move mankind, not to indulge or please it. They "must be honest; they must not varnish, soften or conceal."

What Charlotte Brontë was learning to do in her grim and, let us admit it, her unlovely probation on Dewsbury Moor, was to introduce a fresh aspect of the relations of literature to life. Every great writer has a new note; hers was defiance. All the aspects in which life presented itself to her were distressing, not so much in themselves as in herself. She rebelled against the outrages of poverty, and she drunk to its dregs the cup of straitened circumstances. She was proud, as proud as Lucifer, and she was forced into positions which suppleness and cheerfulness might

have made tolerable, if not agreeable. She wrung from these positions their last drop of bitterness. A very remarkable instance of this may be found in her relation to the Sidgwick family, who, by universal report, were generous, genial and unassuming. To Charlotte Brontë, these kindly, if somewhat commonplace folk grew to seem what a Turkish pacha seems to the inhabitants of a Macedonian village. It was not merely the surroundings of her life, it was life itself, in its general mundane arrangements, which was intolerable to her. She fretted in it, she beat her wings against its bars, and she would have done the same if those bars had been of gold, and if the fruits of paradise had been pushed to her between them. This, I think, is why the expression of her anger seems too often disproportionate, and why her irony is so often preposterous. She was born to resist being caged in any form. Her defiance was universal and often it was almost indiscriminate.

Do not let us presume to blame this insubmission. Still less let us commit the folly of minimising it. A good cheerful little Charlotte Brontë, who thought the best of everybody, who gaily took her place without a grudging sigh, whose first aim was to make those around her happy and to minister to their illusions, would have been a much more welcome inmate of Miss Wooler's household than the cantankerous governess whom nobody could please, whose susceptibilities were always on edge, whose lonely arrogance made her feared by all but one or two who timidly persisted in loving her. But such a paragon of the obvious virtues would have passed as the birds pass and as the flowers. She would have left no mark behind. She would never have enriched the literature of England by one of its master evidences of the force of human will. She would never have stirred hundreds of thousands of consciences to a wholesome questioning of fate and their own souls.

Let us endeavour to pursue this inquiry a few steps further. It is impossible to separate the ethical conditions of an author's mind from the work that he produces. The flower requires the soil; it betrays in its colour and its perfume the environment of its root. The moral constitution of the writer is reflected in the influence of the written page. This is the incessant contention; on one hand the independence of art asserts itself; on the other, it is impossible to escape from the implicit influence of conduct upon art. There have been few writers of any age in whom

this battle raged more fiercely than it did in Charlotte Brontë. Her books, and those of her sisters, seem anodyne enough to-day; to readers of a sensitive species they seemed, when they were published, as dangerous as *Werther* had been, as seductive as *The Nouvelle Heloise*. The reason of this was, in the main, the spirit of revolt which inspired them. There was something harsh and glowing in their landscape; there was that touch of Salvator Rosa which one of their earliest critics observed in them. But more essential was the stubborness, the unflinching determination to revise all accepted formulas of conduct, to do this or that not because it was usual to do it, but because it was rational, and in harmony with human nature.

Into an age which had become almost exclusively utilitarian, and in which the exercise of the imagination, in its real forms, was sedulously discountenanced, Charlotte Brontë introduced passion into the sphere of prose fiction, as Byron had introduced it in the sphere of verse thirty years earlier. It was an inestimable gift; it had to come to us, from Charlotte Brontë or another, to save our literature from a decline into triviality and pretention. But she suffered, as Byron had suffered, in the direct ratio of her originality. If a writer employs passion in an age which has ceased to recognise it as one of the necessities of literary vitality, he is safe to be accused of perverting his readers. Balzac says, "when nothing else can be charged against an author, the reproach of immorality is thrown at his head." When we study the record of the grim life of the sisters at Haworth, like that of three young soldiers round a camp-fire with the enemy prowling in the darkness just out of their sight, when we think of the strenuous vigil, the intractable and indomitable persistence, the splendour of the artistic result, we may console ourselves in our anger at the insults they endured, by reflecting how little they cared. And their noble indifference to opinion further endears them to us. We may repeat of them all what Charlotte in a letter once said of Emily "A certain harshness in her powerful and peculiar character only makes me cling to her more."

This insubmissiveness, which was the unconscious armour given to protect her against the inevitable attacks of fortune, while on the one hand it was the very sign manual of Charlotte's genius, was on the other a drawback from which she did not live long enough to emancipate her nature. It is responsible for her lack of interest in what is delicate and complex; it excused to herself a narrowness

of vision which we are sometimes tempted to find quite distressing. It is probably the cause of a fault that never quits her for long, a tendency to make her characters express themselves with a lyrical extravagance which sometimes comes close to the confines of rodomontade. Charlotte Brontë never arrives at that mastery of her material which permits the writer to stand apart from his work, and sway the reader with successive tides of emotion while remaining perfectly calm himself. Nor is she one of those whose visible emotion is nevertheless fugitive, like an odour, and evaporates leaving the writings works of art which betray no personal agitation. On the contrary, her revolt, her passion, all the violence of her sensibility, are present in her written page, and we cannot read it with serenity or with a merely captious curiosity, because her own eager spirit, immortal in its active force, seems to throb beside it.

The aspect of Charlotte Brontë which I have tried to indicate to you to-day, and which I have sketched thus hastily and slightly, against the background of her almost voiceless residence in Dewsbury, is far from being a complete or unique one. I offer it to you only as a single facet of her wonderful temperament, of the rich spectacle of her talent. I have ventured to propose it, because, in the multiplication of honours and attentions, the tendency to deify the human, to remove those phenomena of irregularity which are the evidence of mortal strength, grows irresistible, and we find ourselves, unconsciously, substituting a waxen bust, with azure eyes and golden hair, for the homely features which (if we would but admit it) so infinitely better match the honest stories. Let us not busy ourselves to make excuse for our brilliant little genius of the moors. Let us be content to take her exactly as she was, with her rebellion and her narrowness, her angers and her urgencies, perceiving that she had to be this sorrowful offspring of a poisoned world in order to clear the wells of feeling for others, and to win from emancipated generations of free souls the gratitude which is due to a precursor.

TENTH

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE BRONTË SOCIETY.

The Tenth Annual Meeting of the Brontë Society was held at the Temperance Institute, Keighley, on January 23rd, 1904, and was largely attended by members from many parts of the West Riding, and by a large number of Keighley friends.

During the afternoon, the business meeting was held. Mr. S. P. Unwin, who presided, stated that recently a deputation from the Haworth District Council waited upon the Council of the Society, in reference to the proposed free library which is to be built out of the grant by Mr. Carnegie. The District Council suggested that if the Society were willing to take two rooms in the new building for the Brontë Museum, they could have them at a rental of not more than that which is now being paid for the present premises. The Council had fully discussed the matter, and had unanimously come to the conclusion that for various reasons it would be inadvisable to remove the museum from its present quarters.

Mr. Butler Wood moved the adoption of the annual report, which was seconded by Mr. Jonathan Caldwell, and agreed to. The seven members of the Council whose turn it was to retire this year were re-elected. It was decided that in the spring an excursion should be made to Cowan Bridge and Kirkby Lonsdale, and in the autumn to Hartshead and Kirklees.

Through the kind invitation of Mr. John Brigg, M.P., over a hundred members and friends took tea.

PUBLIC MEETING.

There was a very large audience in the evening to hear an address from Dr. Richard Garnett, C.B., the former Keeper of the Printed Books at the British Museum Library. Mr. John Brigg, M.P., presided.

The Chairman, in opening the meeting, said that some of those present were living in Keighley when the Brontës were living in Haworth, and had heard that there were some girls up there who had written books which many people thought were important. But he did not know that they in Keighley thought anything of them. He remembered the late Mr. Richard Butterfield telling

his (Mr. Brigg's) father, with amusement, that some people from America were so excited about the books written by the parson's daughters at Haworth that they had actually come over from Cockhill on purpose to see the place where the books were written. It seemed to Mr. Butterfield a very absurd thing. The people of that district could not claim much credit for having found out the merit of the Brontë books until strangers came to tell them. He was not sure that the old spirit of indifference was altogether gone yet. Referring to Mr. Keighley Snowden's "Tales of the Yorkshire Wolds," Mr. Brigg said that he had told a man living up in one of the villages described that a famous man had been writing books about his village, and very good stories they were, too. "Aye," said the man, "I have heard something about them, but they are not all true" (laughter). Mr. Brigg proceeded to say that he thought the worship of the Brontë books was distinctly beneficial. They in that district did not all know much about literary taste. It did not thrive among them. But their devotion to the Brontë writings was a valuable corrective to the harder, harsher, more "moneyfied" spirit in which they generally indulged.

Dr. Garnett then read his paper on "The place of Charlotte Brontë in Nineteenth Century Fiction."

On the motion of Alderman B. S. Brigg, seconded by the Rev. H. J. Palmer, thanks were accorded to Dr. Garnett for his address; and on the motion of Mr. S. P. Unwin, seconded by Mr. J. Caldwell, a similar compliment was paid to the chairman.

THE PLACE OF CHARLOTTE BRONTË IN NINETEENTH CENTURY FICTION.

An Address delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Brontë Society by Dr. R. Garnett, C.B., at Keighley, on January 23rd, 1904.

The invitation to address, on the subject of Charlotte Brontë, an audience of Charlotte Brontë's country people, who, if her life could have been prolonged to the present day, would have been her friends and neighbours, and failing that are her sincere venerators and admirers, may well be regarded as both an honour and a pleasure by any to whose lot it may fall. In my case it is attended with peculiar gratification, inasmuch as, though not a native or an inhabitant of the Brontë country, I may claim some

affinity with it. My ancestors, when I first encounter them, are found dwelling in the little moorland hamlet of Eldwick, in the neighbourhood of Bingley, and I was myself baptised in Bingley Parish Church. The possibility of walking from Bingley to Haworth and back in a long summer morning, was, when I was younger and more active than I am now, victoriously demonstrated by myself. I feel, therefore, that I am not altogether among strangers, and that I may claim some little participation in the honour which the birth of Charlotte Brontë at Haworth reflects upon the district. Happy the district which does possess a minor tutelary divinity, or at least a local hero or heroine! Daniel Webster, addressing the citizens of Rochester in the State of New York, a place celebrated for its lofty waterfall, informed them that no people had ever lost their liberties who had a waterfall forty feet high. A tall statement; taller, some think, than the waterfall. But it is perfectly true that a community with a great memory of person or event to which it can and does look up is more certain than a community less fortunate in this particular of retaining its self respect.

The very fact, however, that I share in the patriotic feeling which has founded and which maintains the Brontë Society, admonishes me to be cautious in my treatment of Charlotte Brontë. Among the reports of the proceedings of previous meetings which have been kindly sent me for perusal I observe an excellent remark, not emanating from a distinguished visitor but from one of yourselves, that there is a danger attending all societies formed for the study and celebration of particular authors, the danger, namely, that the author in question may come to be regarded as the centre, so to speak, of a solar system, around whom all other authors revolve like minor luminaries. This would be a wrong position even for a Shakespeare or a Dante, or a Goethe, not to say a Spenser or a Chaucer. There is no centre for the universe of Literature but the ideal of Literature herself, the light that never was on sea or land. Especially is this danger aggravated when, as in our case, patriotic fervour blends with æsthetic admiration. Within due limits this fervour is a most excellent thing. It supplies warmth and colour; to vary slightly a saying of Emerson's, it sets criticism aflame with emotion: nay, it aids the shortcoming of the critical faculty. As so finely said by Shelley, "Love where Wisdom fails makes Cythna wise." But, carried to excess, it affixes a note of provincialism upon the ad-

mirers, and, which is much worse, upon the object of their admiration also. This imputation of provincialism may be extremely unjust, but so long as it adheres it is fatal, and rightly so, for provincialism in the sense in which I am employing the term, denotes a stratum of mind below the region of the highest excellence, permanently and irremediably at a lower level. It is not like a stain upon a fine stuff, it is a stuff of inferior texture throughout; and in worse plight than material stuff inasmuch as it cannot be converted into a finer material by mechanical process, as Sir John Cutler's worsted stockings became silk stockings by assiduous darning. I will not say that it cannot be dyed to look for awhile like the better quality, but such dyes are deficient in permanence, and you cannot dye a second rate author once a fortnight, like a Persian's beard. We could not do Charlotte Brontë a greater disservice than to fix the note of Provincialism upon her. Instead, therefore, of devoting my paper to an encomium upon her, which might be perilous, I shall compare her with those great, and, as I frankly admit, in many respects greater, authors of her time with whom she admits of comparison, and endeavour to show that she has a sphere of her own independent of any of theirs, which she occupies with as much mastery as any of them occupy their own, and which but for her would have remained unoccupied by any first class writer. The sphere I mean is the sphere of subjective feeling in the narrowest sense of the term. I am not comparing Charlotte Brontë with writers like George Eliot, who delineate subjective emotion from the outside as creators or observers, and paint states of feeling most alien to their own, inspired by passions of which they themselves have had no experience. Such a method is a blending of the objective and subjective; it is subjective in so far as it delineates mental states, and only uses incident as a means of producing those states; but it is objective in so far as it describes conditions external to the author, and unshared by him. The subjectivity of Charlotte Brontë is that more intense subjectivity of which, when fictitious narrative is its medium, Byron is perhaps the most conspicuous example in our literature, where fictitious narrative is merely the means of expressing the writer's own personality, and, substantially, story and character and reflection are but the external projection of his own being. In making the round of Charlotte Brontë and those of her contemporaries who have pretensions to stand in the first rank, I think we shall find that she is the

only one who absolutely conforms to this model: and if so, she has a sphere of her own; and if this is the case, and if she fills this sphere with no less power and mastery than her most eminent contemporaries fill theirs, she is no less entitled to first class rank than they are, even though her sphere may be considerably more restricted. Of course she was very far from having the field of subjective fiction of the intenser type entirely to herself. The number of novels of this type published in the early and middle Victorian periods was very great, and many of them were very excellent fictions, but I do not think that there are any beside hers for which anyone at the present day would be disposed to claim the attribute of genius. One result of this method of treatment must be that we shall have less to say of Charlotte Brontë herself and more of her contemporaries than might be expected in a discourse of which she is the professed subject. But it is well in her own interest to turn aside for awhile from the direct contemplation of her as an isolated literary phenomenon, and note how she stands with reference to those kindred geniuses who share with her the admiration of posterity. If she appeared as the satellite of any of these she would have to be content with a secondary position. But I think it will appear that she occupies quite a distinct position of her own, and fills a place to which they do not pretend. I do not, of course, intend by this a merely local position as the laureate of the moorlands, or even as the literary representative of the great West Riding of Yorkshire. It is here that the caution which I have ventured to give against provincialism is applicable. The West Riding may and should glory in her; but if she is to rank among great writers, it must be shown that her West Riding tales are as fit for universal humanity as George Sand's idylls of Berrichon country life, no less steeped in local colouring than Charlotte Brontë's novels, but readable from China to Peru.

The great novelists of the early and middle divisions of the Victorian era, who constitute the constellation of which we maintain Charlotte Brontë to have been a bright particular star, are Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot, Kingsley, Anthony Trollope, Mrs. Gaskell, Bulwer, Borrow and Disraeli. The list is rigidly framed, excluding writers so excellent in their respective styles as Mrs. Oliphant, Miss Yonge and Wilkie Collins. I think it will be allowed that the quality of genius may be predicated of them all. Some doubts might possibly arise respecting the claims of

Bulwer and Trollope to this divine attribute : but, even if the men were not in the strictest sense geniuses, their talent appears all the more prodigious, and their productiveness renders them more conspicuous in our literature than writers of finer endowments whose spheres were more limited and partial.

Dickens and Thackeray, though each had too much good taste to depreciate the other openly, neither admired nor sympathised with each other as they might have done. Nevertheless, their names are as intimately coupled in our literature as are in German literature the names of the two poets whose union in mind and heart was most perfect, Goethe and Schiller, and for the same reason, not merely because they were illustrious contemporaries, but because they are both the contrasts to and the complements of each other. Dickens is the prose poet, Thackeray the consummate master of prose. Dickens is the great painter of the teeming life of the humbler orders of society : Thackeray of the higher and of the upper middle classes and those parasitic growths of humbler origin—the valet, the bill discounter, the toady, and the like—which insinuate themselves into their sphere. Dickens is the unsurpassed master of broad humour whether jovial or grotesque, Thackeray of humour in its more refined manifestations. Thackeray is a most admirable writer both of humorous and pathetic verse, but you can scarcely call him a poet : Dickens is rarely other than a poet, though much beside, but his metrical performances are insignificant. Neither touch Charlotte Brontë anywhere, they leave the field entirely open for her peculiar gift : and, notwithstanding her enthusiastic admiration for Thackeray, she would have written as she has written if he had not existed.

It is scarcely needful to discuss the relation of Anthony Trollope and George Eliot to Charlotte Brontë, as they both came after her, and had there been any question of borrowing or of influence. they would evidently have been the indebted parties. In fact no such question arises : but it is impossible, in however brief a survey of Charlotte Brontë's position in the literature of her time, to pass over the strong affinity between her work and a portion of George Eliot's. At first sight this is not so apparent, owing to the great dissimilarity of atmosphere and environment. George Eliot never came into Yorkshire, or resided at Brussels. or was brought up at a semi-charity school, or shared the hard lot of private

school-teachers or governesses. Charlotte Brontë knew little about the Midland counties, or Florence, or political agitations, or foreign gaming tables. Nevertheless there is one fibre almost identical, or if distinction there be it is that in Charlotte Brontë's case the fibre is the whole woman, while in George Eliot's it is but one string of a most ample harp. I mean the fibre of passion. Passion is the dominant note of Charlotte Brontë's, nay it is more, it is the music. Take away this ardent, impetuous, sometimes tempestuous feeling, and little remains. But it exists equally in the rich nature of George Eliot, only in company with so many other emotions as to be much less conspicuous. Take, however, the character of Maggie Tulliver, and you will see passion fully as intense and fully as genuine as any that Charlotte Brontë ever depicted: only surrounded with such a crowd of circumstances into which passion does not enter, but which are represented with equal mastery, that it does not produce the same overwhelming effect. You cannot well think of Maggie Tulliver without the three aunts coming to mind also. The point for us, however, is that there is no trace of any direct influence of Charlotte Brontë upon George Eliot. Both drew from the book of Nature, both obeyed the precept. Look into thy heart and write. There can be no doubt that Maggie is a closer portrait of George Eliot than any of her other personages, but she is only one aspect of a various and opulent nature, while Jane Eyre and Caroline Helston, and Lucy Snowe are substantially Charlotte Brontë herself. Hence their surpassing force, they gain in intensity what they lose in breadth. In truth to nature and in the interest of person and situation, there is nothing to choose between Charlotte and her successor. It is worthy of remark that Charlotte Brontë owes much of her energy of representation to her custom of writing in the first person. Two of her three novels are so composed, and hence emotion comes straight from author to reader without the interposition of any medium. This method has its disadvantages, but is excellent for the subjective writer whose forte is passion. "The Sorrows of Werther" could not otherwise have been made impressive, but when Goethe came to give a picture of general society he dropped it: nor is it a usual method with the novelists who have given us entire worlds of personages, Scott and Dickens, and George Eliot. I might almost add Anthony Trollope, though perhaps the bulk of the latter's work might be more correctly described

as constituting not a world but a panorama. A marvellous panorama it is of "all sorts and conditions of men," and if wanting the creative breath which prevades Dickens it may at least be said that Trollope's observation sometimes aids him where Dickens's deserts him. Dickens is a poet, and a poet cannot work unless he be in some degree in sympathy with his subject. Dickens's sympathy apparently abandoned him when he came to deal with the higher classes, and his portraits of these are little better than caricatures. He is the painter, whose ability to render faithfully what he sees distinctly may be impaired by the state of his nerves, or any one of a thousand accidents. But Trollope is like a camera, fit the instrument up properly, bring the object to it or it to the object, and you may be sure of a faithful rendering, though it may depend much upon the state of the atmosphere whether bright or prosaic. It is evident therefore that he can have little in common with Charlotte Brontë, and that each is far from encroaching on the other's sphere.

In truth, three out of the four novelists who have been mentioned are parted by Charlotte Brontë by a wide and deep gulf. They are objective, that is, they describe scenes and create characters external to themselves : while she is subjective, that is, almost everything she writes is related not merely artistically but vitally to herself, and has in some sense been lived over by her. George Eliot is to a certain extent in the same category as Charlotte Brontë, but so wide is her range that the portion of the work of which this can be affirmed appears but small in comparison with that which lies outside of Charlotte's sphere : she cannot, therefore, be regarded as the especial representative of subjective passion. There is also strong evidence of a desire to make her fictions operate upon the world, and contribute to its amelioration, a feeling entirely absent from Charlotte Brontë, as it must be from every purely subjective writer. I do not think that George Eliot has carried it to any inartistic length : but this is more than can be said of the next distinguished novelist upon our list, Charles Kingsley. Kingsley's earliest novels are written to recommend the ideas of Christian socialism : his "Hypatia" and "Two Years Ago" are manifestos of Broad Church theology ; "Westward Ho ! " endeavours the revival of the age of Elizabeth. All approach perilously near the region of the tract : but all are saved by the writer's energy and marvellous gift of picturesque description, as well as the fine moral tone and the

translation of the ideas of Carlyle into ordinary speech. They have this much in common with Charlotte Brontë's novels that they are works of intense passion, but hers is the passion of an individual and his the enthusiasm of humanity. A novelist of equal genius, but who appears at first sight at the opposite pole from Kingsley—Disraeli—resembles him in the extent to which he writes with a direct purpose. Long before Charlotte Brontë's time "Vivian Grey" had been written to satirise the politics of the day, and point out the possibility of the formation of a new party: and "Contarini Fleming" to idealise Disraeli himself in the character of poet, to which he then sincerely thought he had a claim. During the period of Charlotte's literary activity Disraeli produced three novels with the most unmistakable political purpose, and therefore not touching at all upon her peculiar domain. "Contarini Fleming" in some measure does so, and the contrast of method is instructive. We see Charlotte representing the heroines who impersonate her conception of herself in the simplest manner, with the least possible diversity of circumstances from her own, in a word, painting herself as she really was. Disraeli, on the contrary, envelops his childhood with picturesqueness and magnificence, places himself in ideal surroundings and in an ideal atmosphere, and, while not unfaithful to his own conception of his own character, makes his environment not what it was, but what he would have wished it to have been. This fundamental difference of method places even his subjective work in quite a different category from Charlotte Brontë's. Borrow presents a curious combination of objective and subjective tendencies. No writer can possibly be more vivid in description, or more interested in things external to himself: on the other hand his works are pervaded by his own personality, and, while most graphic in depicting salient traits of character, he gives us no whole man except himself. In both these characteristics he differs from Charlotte Brontë, upon whom he can have exerted no influence. There remain two authors of singular versatility, Bulwer and Mrs. Gaskell. Bulwer's passion was literary fame, in pursuit of this he accommodates himself with unrivalled dexterity to the taste of the day, but you never can be sure of having his real mind, unless perhaps when his novels turn upon occult studies. He cannot, therefore, be compared with Charlotte Brontë. The last great novelist on our list, Mrs. Gaskell, not the least of whose titles to fame is her admirable and classical

biography of her heroine Charlotte, was, like Bulwer, though from different motives, so versatile, that it is hard to say where the real manifestation of her individuality is to be found. All her books are masterly, but no two are alike. It is difficult, therefore, to parallel her with an authoress so thoroughly self-consistent as Charlotte Brontë.

This hasty and imperfect review of the characteristics of the chief writers of Charlotte Brontë's period who have any claim to be accounted her rivals should at all events suffice to establish that she occupies a niche of her own, and cannot be classified with any of them. This is enough to rescue her from the charge of provincialism. She is not merely the representative of a particular district, but occupies a place in the great Pantheon of English literature which but for her would have remained unfilled. If I were now writing a history of English literature it would be needful to define this place, and vindicate by examples her right to hold it. This is unnecessary on the present occasion, when I am addressing an audience well read in her writings and patriotically interested in them, and which has, moreover, frequently had the advantage of hearing them discussed by critics of eminence. We may assume as generally admitted that the predominant characteristic of Charlotte Brontë's writings is Passion—whether the passion of love or the passion of hate, or local or patriotic enthusiasm, or any other by which her intense and indomitable nature might at the time be actuated. None of her contemporaries are open to the impressions of powerful feeling in an equal degree, and none are so exclusively possessed by them. Her sphere, therefore, while it has many points of contact with theirs, especially with George Eliot's, is nevertheless dissimilar. This is to say that she is original, and indeed I can hardly think of any writer of her day, except Borrow and Browning, of whom absolute originality can be so unequivocally predicated. A considerable affinity to Byron may be traced. Like him she possessed

> "A fount of fiery life
> Which served for a Titanic strife."

But while Byron marred splendid work by frequent affectation and insincerity, nothing is more characteristic of Charlotte Brontë than her absolute truthfulness. Some of her pictures, especially of the schools where she was pupil and teacher, have been taxed with inaccuracy. This may be the fact, but none can doubt that she described

them as they appeared to herself. She would not for the world have debased her art to a manufacture, or put pen to paper in the absence of a definite call. Once, indeed, she was prevailed upon to lengthen by an episode a novel which had fallen short of the regular three volume quantum, but the episode is one of the best things in the book. As this austere conscientiousness is one of her glories, so it is correlated with her principal shortcoming, not a shortcoming which in any way detracts from the merits of the novels which she has given us, but one which prevented her from giving us many more. She is deficient in invention and creative imagination: she can only speak of what she has realised by her personal experience. Hence all three novels are mainly autobiographical. She is indeed fully capable of drawing portraits of persons external and even distasteful to herself with startling effect, witness the wonderful picture of Madame Beck in Villette, but they must be people she has known, and who have come within her own sphere. She cannot create a character by sheer force of imagination, nor can she devise a set of circumstances out of which to construct a story. The consequence was a great limitation in her powers of production. She had by no means worn her mind out, but she had exhausted her material; and as she would not condescend with many another novelist to use the old material over again, it is probable that even if her life had been prolonged she would have written little more. If, like George Sand, while retaining unimpaired the passion which first set her pen in motion, she had been able to devise an endless series of novel scenes and incidents, she might, with life and health, have filled a prodigious place in our literature. As it is, her praise must be the reverse to have produced a greater effect than almost any other novelist whose production is limited to three books.

It is not easy to speak of Currer Bell without naming Ellis and Acton. Anne Brontë lives by her sisters, a single lyric reveals the poetess. Some distinguished critics have preferred Emily to Charlotte. I should deprecate the comparison: their genius and their spheres are dissimilar. Charlotte is not a poet, and Emily is not an artist. The apology for the savage repulsiveness, tempered by the deepest tenderness, of her "Wuthering Heights" is that save in form it is a lyric, a work of poetical inspiration. It came to her, she did not plan or scheme it. The same is true of her better poems, especially of her masterpiece, the lines beginning, "No coward soul is mine," one of the

very few examples of the sublime in English poetry of the Victorian era, and in intensity of feeling and magnificence of expression surpassing every other lyric of an English poetess. Had she lived and had this inspiration continued to be vouchsafed to her, whether in prose or verse, her place must have been high indeed. But it was fitful and capricious, independent of her own will, and might never have revisited her. In any case, neither with it nor without it, would she have emulated the more disciplined genius of her sister, any more than the latter would have rivalled her as a poetess.

I am about to conclude my discourse by reading an anecdote of Charlotte Brontë from a book which, being privately printed, is probably unknown to you, supplemented by some reflections and reminiscences by the writer, a man of the most delightful nature and the highest culture. He is the late William Johnson Cory, dear to some few as a poet, appreciated by still fewer as an historian, though without a rival in pregnancy and conciseness; the most efficient Eton master of his day and the best modern writer of Latin verse; the reformer of King's College, Cambridge, in conjunction with Henry Bradshaw; and who nevertheless with all these titles to distinction, has remained almost unknown. I will endeavour to make him known here as an admirer of Charlotte Brontë. He says in the privately printed book to which I have alluded, the "Extracts from his Letters and Journals," printed after his death, describing a visit paid to Haworth in 1867:—

"Went to Haworth with the three Butlers. Glad to find Arthur Butler thinking as I do about "Shirley," the best of books. They told me what Richmond told them about Charlotte Brontë's portrait. She was very shy, and for two sittings he was out of hope; but the third time she met the Duke of Wellington's servant leaving the house, which made Richmond say, 'if you had been here a quarter of an hour sooner you would have seen the Duke of Wellington.' Whereupon she broke out into eager asking about the Duke; and so the painter caught the eager expression given in his portrait, of which I bought a photograph in Keighley. When Richmond was getting on well with the portrait she stood behind him looking at it: he heard a sob—she said, 'Excuse me—it is so like my sister Emily.'"

Mr. Cory visited the parsonage, which he describes as a miserable homestead, and he adds:

"Out of that prison the little Charlotte put forth a hand to feel for the world of human emotion, I wish she would come back to us, and count up the myriads to whom she has given new souls.

Now I remember reading 'Jane Eyre' straight through at a sitting in my home drawing-room, and again on the black, gnarled wreathed rocks of Bude (1850) where there was a lowering stormcloud and a sunset on a distant sail, and a hollow roar in the reefs, and the reading broken off by a queer rattle of shingle which turned out to be a sheep fallen from the cliff: the last summer holidays spent with my mother."

There is a peculiar propriety in Mr. Cory's record of his having read "Jane Eyre" upon the cliffs at Bude, for you will remember that Charlotte Brontë's mother was a Cornish woman. I do not think however, that her Cornish ancestors were, like her father's family, Celtic. Much of her genius may be traced with probability to the happy mixture of blood, connected with the environment of her youth, peculiar, independent, original, but much less rough than Emily Brontë and Mrs. Gaskell between them have made it out to be. I will not suppress Mr. Cory's pretty compliment to the fair sex of these parts. "The women," he says, "talk most musically." When he speaks of having read "Jane Eyre" straight through at a sitting, we must conclude that he had the day before him when he began. This is not quite my experience. When I first read "Jane Eyre" my days were given to official work, and I could read only in the evening. I remember how the book kept me up to two o'clock in the morning, and how I closed it at the end of that thrilling passage where Jane proves to Mr. Rochester that an evil thing has really been near her by showing him that her veil has been torn from the top to the bottom. Fame might be founded on this incident alone: but it is a stronger proof of Charlotte's genius that her work and life as a whole should be able to awaken intense interest in readers so cultured and refined, so tender and manly and sweet-natured as Mr. Cory's letters and journals show him to have been.

Will she retain this power? I think so. It is a remark of Aubrey, writing three quarters of a century after Shakespeare, that Shakespeare's dramatic contemporaries, frequently preferred to him in his own age, are already out of date because they merely depict contemporary manners, while Shakespeare depicts universal manners. This is just what Charlotte Brontë does in her far more

limited sphere; she gives us the emotions which will be always true, always living, and her work owes little or nothing to the merely accidental and temporary. Works which reproduce "the very form and pressure of the time," and deal with the questions, momentous as these may be, which principally interest the time, are inevitably doomed to dwindle in attractiveness—although, if true works of genius, they cannot die—until their abiding worth comes to be mainly historical. They may in this stage be compared to fossils, the imposing skeletons of grand and gigantic creatures whose softer parts have undergone decomposition: while the simply subjective romance, derived from a source of perennial feeling, reaches posterity like the pebble, which the everlasting roll of Time's ocean has only served to polish.

BRONTË SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS.

PART XV.

TRANSACTIONS:

CONTAINING

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

AT BATLEY AND HAWORTH,

AND

A PAPER READ BEFORE THE SOCIETY.

PRINTED FOR THE SOCIETY BY
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JANUARY, 1906.

NOTE.

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ELEVENTH
ANNUAL MEETING OF THE BRONTË SOCIETY.

The Eleventh Annual Meeting took place at Batley, on the 14th of January, 1905, in the Town Hall.

A Public Meeting was held at 3 p.m., for the purpose of hearing an address by Mrs. Humphry Ward, on *Wuthering Heights*. Mr. Walter Bagshaw, J.P., presided over a crowded meeting, and he was supported by Mr. S. P. Unwin, Dr. J. A. Erskine Stuart, Mr. C. A. Federer, the Rev. O. K. Hobbs, M.A., Mrs. John Stubley, Miss Elsie Taylor, Miss Cockshott, Mrs. C. E. Sugden, Mr. Butler Wood, Mr. W.T. Field (secretary), Councillor W. W. Yates, Mr. J. J. Stead, and others.

The Chairman extended a very cordial welcome on behalf of the people of Batley to the members of the Brontë Society. He was sorry that they, locally, had not been entrusted with some of the arrangements for that meeting, as he felt sure that they would have been enabled to extend hospitality on a more liberal scale than would be given that day. Some of them, he believed, were that day visiting Batley for the first time. They had no beautiful buildings to show them, and nothing much of historic interest, at least none they could find out during the short interval between the afternoon and evening meetings. As they knew, the trade of the town was the utilization of wastes. They gathered up the rags and tatters from all parts of the globe and utilized them in their manufactures. The thought suggested itself to him that if some genius could utilize the great waste in the literary world there was a fortune at his disposal. What an amount of literary effort was put into the waste paper basket every week. If someone could utilize it and produce some good readable matter from it he would make a fortune.

He was sorry that in Batley they did not possess a Philosophical Society for the encouragement of literature, science and art; but with the establishment of their new Free Library he hoped that Batley would be better equipped in the future for the study of literature. At times he was impressed with the idea that they had the yellow peril in their midst—he did not mean the influence of Asiatic labour—but the search after the yellow metal, gold.

In modern times the struggle for wealth was so keen that men were casting on one side almost everything of a higher nature in the pursuit of gold. Rarely nowadays did business men devote themselves to serious reading, and especially to poetry. Their reading was of a lighter kind, and that was one reason why, personally, he was grateful to the Brontë Society for holding its meeting at Batley that day. He thought it would stimulate the reading of literature of a healthy and pure character.

Then Batley was so near the Brontë district that they ought on that account to take a deep interest in the Brontë works. From his window he could see Oakwell Hall, Birstall Church, Rydings, Red House, and other scenes mentioned in *Shirley*. He was first interested in Brontë literature through living near to Miss Nussey, and he had the privilege of seeing her in many moods. He had seen her when she was a cheerful, charming, and fascinating English lady, and he had seen her in her eccentric mood—very eccentric—and he had seen her when she was in trouble. It was through Miss Nussey that he learned his faults, and he was gratified to find that he had only one and it was that he was a Radical. Sometimes he teased her on her state of single blessedness, and she assured him it was not the fault of the men. One could readily imagine that in her younger days she must have been a most attractive person, in fact she was so in her old age. Some amount of ridicule had been cast upon such organizations as the Brontë Society, which were said to exist for hero worship. Well, Carlyle placed amongst his heroes the man of letters. It seemed strange that these literary heroes should rule the world much more after they were dead than when they were alive. That afternoon they had with them Mrs. Humphry Ward, a lady whose fame was known to them all, so that anything he could say would be like gilding refined gold. Before inviting Mrs. Ward to deliver her address, he asked Miss Taylor to perform an interesting ceremony.

Miss Elsie Taylor then stepped forward, and handed a bouquet of flowers to Mrs. Humphry Ward, who thanked her for the gift.

After Mrs. Ward had read a paper on *Wuthering Heights*, Mr. T. C. Taylor, M.P., responded to the call of the chairman to move a vote of thanks to the reader of the paper. He addressed himself first to the members of

the Council of the Brontë Society, whom he thanked for having brought them there, and provided the great treat they had enjoyed in listening to Mrs. Humphry Ward. She said that though horror and extravagance characterised *Wuthering Heights*, they were not the great characteristic notes of Emily Brontë's genius. He dare not differ from so eminent a craftswoman, and so great a critic as Mrs. Ward, but if he might go back to the time of his boyhood, when he first read *Wuthering Heights*—and he had read it since—he would say that horror and extravagance impressed his mind very deeply. When one became more matured in life and experience, one found what looked like her extravagances had sometimes their counterpart in real life, but, after all, one must admit that there was in the book a great deal of what one might call exaggerated reality. There was also a great deal in *Wuthering Heights* that was true to life. He thought that if Emily Brontë, undoubtedly the ablest of the three sisters, had lived to have a wider outlook and a wider experience of life than could be gained in the narrow circle in which she moved, we should have had work of gigantic power, of greater coherence and certainly of more finish than *Wuthering Heights*. The book had afforded Mrs. Ward a text upon which she had discoursed sweet literary music, and he felt grateful to her for that visit. His grandfather and grandmother lived for forty years in Briarfield Hall, a cousin of his now resided at Fieldhead, and, therefore, he felt, somehow, quite connected with the Brontës himself. At all events, they were proud of the Yorkshire features of the Brontë writings. Mr. Taylor also referred to the literary work of Mary Taylor—no relation of his, unhappily for him—a friend of the Brontës, who died a few years ago at Cleckheaton after a very eventful and almost romantic career. Miss Taylor wrote a book which he claimed they ought to know better, as it deservcd, in his opinion, to rank along with—although not quite equal to—the books of Charlotte and Emily Brontë. He esteemed it a great privilege to be allowed to move a vote of thanks to so eminent an authoress as Mrs. Humphry Ward, and to have heard a criticism by so able a lady.

Mrs. John Stubley seconded the proposition, which was carried unanimously.

Mrs. Ward thanked them for the kind reception accorded her. With respect to Mr. Taylor's remarks,

what she wished to say was, that while the horror and extravagance of Emily Brontë's work were to some extent the literary fashion, the truth and reality were all her own.

Mr. S. P. Unwin proposed a vote of thanks to the Mayor and Corporation of Batley for the use of the hall. He remarked that they were always welcome wherever they went, and they had been welcomed at Batley. It was also his duty, on behalf of the society, to offer its tribute of thanks to Mrs. Ward for having come down to Batley. They had had a rare and exceptional opportunity which the people of Batley had not failed to appreciate.

Mr. Butler Wood seconded the motion which was carried.

Mr. W. W. Yates moved a vote of thanks to the chairman, which was seconded by the Rev. O. K. Hobbs, and duly acknowledged by the chairman.

MEMBERS' ANNUAL MEETING.

After tea, the annual meeting took place, Mr. S. P. Unwin presiding.

Mr W. T. Field (Bradford), corresponding secretary, read the report, which showed a membership of about 350. The amount taken for admission to the museum at Haworth, had been £29 17s. 2d.

Mr. J. J. Stead (Heckmondwike), hon. treasurer, submitted the balance-sheet, shewing the receipts to have been £90 5s. 6d., and the expenditure £83 7s. 10d., leaving a balance of £6 17s. 8d.

The Chairman pointed out that the balance was £9 less than last year, but it must be remembered that over £10 had been spent on Brontë books, photos, and relics. With regard to the big scheme—the purchase of Haworth Vicarage for the purposes of the museum—that would be a separate undertaking of the society, and with separate subscriptions. There was very little doubt, considering the interest taken in the Brontë Society, its popularity not only in this country and in America, but elsewhere, that a determined effort would be made to raise money to purchase the property if it could be obtained at a reasonable price.

Mr. R. Denby (Bradford) formally moved the adoption of the report and balance-sheet.

Mr. W. W. Yates (Dewsbury) seconded, and the motion was agreed to.

The Right Hon. the Earl of Crewe was re-appointed president.

Mr. Field reminded the meeting, that on the 31st of March, 1905, it would be fifty years since Charlotte Brontë died, and a discussion took place with respect to the desirability of commemorating the event.

Mr. J. J. Stead thought it might be a good thing to have a service in the church at Haworth, and to endeavour to get Mr. Bradley (the "Mr. Sweeting" of *Shirley*) to speak Mr. Bradley was now living at Richmond, in Surrey.

The preceding has been reproduced from the account given by the *Dewsbury Reporter*.

"WUTHERING HEIGHTS."

The substance of a paper read at the Annual Meeting of the Brontë Society, held at Batley, January 14th, 1905, by Mrs. Humphry Ward.

Mrs. Ward said it was delightful to find herself in Yorkshire, in the Brontës' own county. At the same time, she confessed that it made her very nervous, because she was among the descendants of those who knew the sisters Brontë personally. Although she could not plead that, yet in her early childhood she was within touch of those who had known them—Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Forster and her own people, the Arnolds of Fox Howe. In dealing with the books of the Brontë sisters it was always best to endeavour to speak, not the language of mere panegyric, but that natural to a reader whose critical sense, no less than his sense of enjoyment, shared in the general stimulus which was derived from the power and vitality of the books themselves. The Brontës, continued Mrs. Ward, are searching personalities. They challenge no less than they attract. Their vigorous effect upon the reader's sympathies and judgment has been always part of their ascendency and one great secret of their enduring fame. To handle their work in a spirit of flat eulogy and recommendation would be an offence to it and to them. Its technical faultiness, moreover, is an element of its charm.

The romantic inequalities, the romantic alternations of power and weakness which these books show, appeal to those deep and mingled instincts of the English mind

which have produced our rich, violent, faulty, incomparable English literature. In each of her novels, as it were, Charlotte Brontë touches the shield of the reader; she does not woo or persuade him; she attacks him, and, complete as his ultimate surrender may be, he yields fighting. And if this is the case with Charlotte Brontë, it is still more so with Emily. Emily's genius was the greater of the two, yet of a similar quality and fibre. It provokes even more vivid reactions of feeling in the reader, and yet in those who have felt her spell she wins an ultimate sympathy and compels an ultimate admiration so strong that no one wishes to examine the stages of his own conquest. We passionately accept her or we are untouched by her. If the former, we are apt to forget our own critical wrestles by the way; we are impatient of demurs, of half words, and all mere ingenuities of opinion concerning her and that work which is her direct and personal voice.

Nevertheless, criticism has still a real work to do with the strange novel of *Wuthering Heights*, and the few passionate poems of Emily Brontë. The novel had not yet taken the place which rightly belonged to it, though in recent years it had advanced in popularity. She recalled the disparaging estimate of the late Sir Leslie Stephen, who called it a "baseless nightmare." Mrs. Ward further pointed out with regard to early criticisms of the book, that one heard in these sentences, with their note of protesting emotion no less than in Charlotte's tender and dignified defence, the echo of an angry public opinion, indignant in the typical English way that any young woman and especially a clergyman's daughter, should write of such unbecoming scenes and persons as those which form the subjects of *Wuthering Heights*, and determined if it could to punish the offender. But for us fifty years later, she continued, how irrelevant are both the attack and the defence. *Wuthering Heights* lives as great imagination of which we must take the consequences—the bad with the good, and will continue to live whether it pleases us personally or no.

Moreover the book has much more than a merely personal or local significance. It belongs to a particular European moment, and like Charlotte's work though not in the same way, it holds a typical and representative place in the English literature of the century. Emily Brontë, like her sister, inherited Celtic blood together with a stern

and stoical tradition of daily life. She was a wayward, imaginative girl, physically delicate, brought up in loneliness and poverty amid a harsh, yet noble landscape of hill, moor, and stream. This child of genius had from the beginning a certain access to good books, and through books and newspapers to the central world of thought and affairs.

In 1827, when Emily was nine, she and her sisters used to amuse themselves in the wintry firelight by choosing imaginary islands to govern, and peopling them with famous men. In 1829 Charlotte describes the newspapers taken by the family and lets us know that a neighbour lent them "Blackwood's Magazine." It was indeed, by the reading of "Blackwood" and later of "Frazer" (from 1832, apparently), that the Brontë household was mainly kept in touch with the current literature, criticism, poetry, and fiction of their day. During their eager, enthusiastic youth the Brontë sisters were readers of Christopher North, Hogg, De Quincey, and Maginn in "Blackwood," of Carlyle's early essays and translations in "Frazer," of Scott and Lockhart, no less than of Wordsworth, Southey, and Coleridge. There can be no question that the influences of youth were romantic influences, and it can be easily shown that among them were many kindling sparks from that "unextinguished hearth" of German poetry and fiction which played so large a part in English imagination during the first half of the century.

In 1830, Carlyle, measuring the progress of English knowledge and opinion, reports triumphantly "a rapidly growing favour for German literature." In 1839, "Blackwood" published a translation of Tieck's "Pietro d'Abano," a wild robber and magician story of the type which spread the love of monster and vampire, witch and werewolf, through a Europe tired, for the moment, of the eighteenth century commonsense, and more important still, a long section, excellently rendered from Goethe's "Dichtung und Wahrheit." In that year Emily Brontë was alone with her father and aunt at Haworth, while her two sisters were teaching as governesses. "Blackwood" came as usual, and one may surely imagine the long, thin girl bending in the firelight over these pages from Goethe, receiving the impress of their lucidity, their charm, their sentiment, and "natural magic," nourishing from them the vivid and masterly intelligence which eight years later produced *Wuthering Heights*. But she was to make a

nearer acquaintance with German thought and fancy than could be got from the pages of "Blackwood" and "Frazer." In 1842 she and Charlotte journeyed to Brussels, and there a certain divergence seems to have declared itself between the literary tastes and affinities of the two sisters. While Charlotte, who had already become an eager reader of French books, was carried, by the teaching of M. Héger acting upon her special qualities and capacities, into that profounder appreciation of the French romantic spirit which shows itself thenceforward in all her books, Emily set herself against French models that M. Héger was constantly proposing to the sisters. Emily learnt German diligently, and there were indications that the small library Emily left behind her contained much German literature.

For a year and a half *Wuthering Heights*, in common with *Agnes Grey* and *The Professor*, travelled wearily from publisher to publisher. At last Messrs. Newby accepted the first two, but they lingered in the press for months, and *Wuthering Heights* appeared after the publication of *Jane Eyre*, and amid the full noise of its fame, only to be received as an earlier and cruder work of Currer Bell's for which even those who admired *Jane Eyre* could find little praise and small excuse. Emily seemed to have shown not a touch of jealousy or discouragement. "Stronger than a man, simpler than a child"—these words were Emily Brontë's true epitaph both as an artist and as a human being. Her strength of will and imagination struck those who knew her and those who read her as often inhuman or terrible: and with this was combined a simplicity partly of genius, partly of a strange innocence and spirituality, which gave her a place apart in English letters. But though Emily, had she lived, might have chosen many happier subjects, treated with a more flowing unity than she achieved in *Wuthering Heights*, the full competence of genius was already present in her book. The common, hasty, didactic note that Charlotte often struck was never heard. She was pure mind and passion; no one from the pages of *Wuthering Heights* could guess at the small likes and dislikes, the religious or critical antipathies, the personal weaknesses of the artist who wrote it. She had the highest power—the power which gave life, intensest life, to the creatures of imagination, and in doing so endowed them with an independence behind which the maker was forgotten.

Wuthering Heights is a book of the later romantic movement, betraying the influences of German romantic imagination. The love of violence in speech and action, the preference for the hideous in character and the abnormal in situation—of all these there are abundant examples in *Wuthering Heights*. Mrs. Ward gave examples of these, and remarked that they would not have been written precisely as they were written but for the "Germanism" of the thirties and forties, and but for the German tales which Emily Brontë read. Nevertheless, horror and extravagance were not really the characteristic mark and quality of the book. As in the case of Charlotte Brontë, the peculiar force of Emily's work lay in the fact that it represented the grafting of a European tradition upon a mind already richly stored with English and local reality, possessing at command a style at once strong and simple, capable of both homeliness and magnificence.

Emily is never flurried, never self-conscious; she is master of herself at the most rushing moments of feeling or narrative; her style is simple, sensuous, adequate, and varied from first to last: she has fewer purple patches than Charlotte, but at its best her insight, no less than her power of praise, is of a diviner and more exquisite quality. *Wuthering Heights* was the product of imagination working probably under influences from German literature, and marvellously fused with local knowledge and a realistic power, which within its own range has seldom been surpassed. Its few faults are soon enumerated. The tendency to extravagance and monstrosity may be taken to some extent as belonging more to a literary fashion than to the artist. Then there is a certain awkwardness and confusion of structure; a strain of ruthless exaggeration in the character of Heathcliff, and some absurdities and contradictions in the character of Nelly Dean. There are speeches and actions of Catherine's which have no relation to any life of men and women that the true world knows. Nevertheless, there are whole sections of the story during which the character of Heathcliff is presented to us with a marvellous and essential truth. The third and last act of *Wuthering Heights* which extends from the childhood of the younger Catherine to the death of Heathcliff is no less masterly than the first section of the book, and much more complex in plan. Never for a moment do you lose hold upon the Yorkshire landscape and the Yorkshire folk.

But death came, swift and unforeseen. The artist sank

"Baffled, unknown, self-consumed,"

and her place has but slowly defined itself among us. To its final determination we have to bring, of course, not only *Wuthering Heights*, but the poems which were in the volume of 1846, as well as those which Charlotte selected and published after Emily's death. It is now recognised that at least six or seven belong—in spite of some technical blemishes—to what is noblest and most vital in English verse. In the two noble poems, "Remembrance" and "Death" we have her gift at its greatest. Emily's religious faith was a mystery in life, but in dying she gave it voice, and it is the voice of her century—a cry in which is summed up, as it were, the sound of many waters, and the last but sufficient consolation of innumerable souls.

The Address is in substance Mrs. Ward's Preface to "Wuthering Heights" (Haworth Edition).

COMMEMORATION OF THE FIFTIETH YEAR AFTER THE DEATH OF CHARLOTTE BRONTË.

The Special Meetings arranged for Saturday, October 7th, 1905, to "commemorate the fiftieth year after the death of Charlotte Brontë," were a marked success. There was quite a pilgrimage to the village which has become famous from its association with the name of the sisters whose genius has won for them an enduring place in the records of English literature. Some thousands of admirers of the Brontë genius travelled Haworth way, and in the early afternoon there was a continuous stream of visitors, rich and poor, cultured and simple, fashionable and otherwise, slowly making their way up the narrow lanes and winding streets to the handsome church which stands amid its cluster of houses right on the brow of the hill, with the Worth Valley on one side, and the lonely moors on the other, seemingly more bleak and lonely than ever in the grey light of a chill October afternoon. In the pretty churchyard, which, with its rich growth of trees and shrubs and herbage, presents a striking contrast to the bare, bleak moorlands above, and conveys an appropriate

and pleasing impression of shelter and peace, the pilgrims gathered in little groups, calling to mind possibly scenes and incidents from the writings and the lives of the sisters who must have spent many hours, sad and happy, amid these same surroundings. Then they filed into the church, which, fairly spacious though it is, was scarce large enough to accommodate the congregation of two thousand or more which filled every available bit of space, even to the marble chancel parapet and the edge of the little memorial tablet to Emily and Charlotte, strewn with white flowers and over which had been set a freshly cut cypress wreath.

Service in Haworth Church.

In the church a short service was conducted. Hymns written by Charlotte and Anne Brontë were sung, while a sermon bearing on the life and the struggles of the famous eldest daughter of the Haworth parsonage was preached by the Rev. Samuel Bickersteth, D.D. (vicar of Leeds). He took for his text the eleventh verse of the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews—"Let us therefore labour to enter into that rest." Men well qualified for the task, he said, had often touched on the artistic and literary genius of Charlotte Brontë. His duty that afternoon was, however, not to lecture but to preach, and to try to derive some lesson from his subject that would send men and women back to the battle of life determined to fight the battle more manfully and bravely. The words which he had chosen for his text, strangely enough, brought into relationship terms which were ordinarily used in contrast—labour and rest. But both labour and rest were of different kinds, and the highest form of rest was really that which came to him whose labour had been so perfected that it ceased to be labour. When it reached that stage it became one of the most beautiful and beneficent forms of rest. And it was the lesson which in a spiritual and intellectual sense they learned from the life and the writings of Charlotte Brontë.

Evening Meeting.

Tea was served to the members of the Society in the Old Church School-room. Subsequently a public meeting was held in the new School, which has recently superseded the old building in which Charlotte Brontë herself taught as a Sunday-school teacher; the purpose of the meeting

being to hear an address from Mr. Ernest de Selincourt, lecturer in Modern English Literature to the University of Oxford. The chair was occupied by Sir Swire Smith, and among those present were Mr. George Smith (ex Mayor of Halifax) and Mrs. Smith, Mr. Sydney Marriott, of London (treasurer of the Dickens Fellowship), Mrs. Stubley (Batley), Miss Florence Balgarnie (Scarborough), Mr. J. J. Brigg (Keighley), Miss de Selincourt, Mrs. Galloway, Mr. S. P. Unwin (Bradford), Miss Cockshott (Oakworth), Mr. W. W. Yates (Dewsbury), Mr. W. T. Field (hon. secretary). There was a large attendance, the hall being crowded.

After an able and interesting address from the chairman, Mr. Ernest de Selincourt read a paper on the "Genius of the Brontës." At the conclusion of the meeting, on the motion of Mr. S. P. Unwin, seconded by Mr J. J. Stead, thanks were accorded to Mr. de Selincourt for his address, and on the motion of Mr. J. J. Brigg, seconded by Miss Balgarnie, supported by Mrs. George Smith, a similar compliment was paid to the rector of Haworth and his assistants for their co-operation with the society in the memorial festival. Mr Unwin moved a vote of thanks to the chairman.

Mr. W. T. Field, the hon. secretary, read a letter which he had received in reference to the health of the Rev. C. B. Nicholls, the husband of Charlotte Brontë, who is still living in Banagher, Ireland, and is in his eighty-ninth year. The letter, which was written by Mrs. Nicholls, the second wife of the venerable gentleman, stated:—"Mr. Nicholls has been very infirm and weakly for some time, and we are obliged to keep him very quiet and free from the least excitement, as his heart is very weak, but, thank God, he suffers little pain, and goes out a little every day. Still, we let him see few people, nor allow even our own relations to talk very much to him. We read for him, but only things of common interest. We never give him letters or anything likely to excite him or set him thinking."

From the *Yorkshire Daily Observer.*

THE GENIUS OF THE BRONTËS.

An Address delivered at Haworth, October 7th, 1905, in commemoration of the Fiftieth year after the death of Charlotte Brontë, by Mr. Ernest de Selincourt, M.A., of Oxford University.

When your Committee did me the honour of inviting me to address you on this great occasion, I gladly accepted, but without realising, as vividly as I do at this moment, the difficulties of the task. The ordinary aim of a lecturer is to impart knowledge and to stimulate enthusiasm; but it is not open to me to pursue such a course. For nothing but a love for the Brontës could have brought you to this celebration to-day; their work is as familiar to you as it is to me, and many of you have, doubtless, a fuller intimacy than I can claim with the details of their life, and with that country which is not so much the background of their art as the very stuff from which they fashioned it. It only seems left, therefore, for me to tell you that I share your enthusiasm, and to explain why I share it, by recounting to you what appear to me the salient features of the genius of Charlotte and Emily Brontë.

Few responsible critics, asked to name the chief novelists of the nineteenth century, would hesitate before they mentioned seven as standing out high above the rest, —two in the early nineteenth century, Scott and Jane Austen, two in the later nineteenth century, George Eliot and George Meredith, and three in the mid-Victorian era, Dickens, Thackeray, and the Brontës. By the Brontës they would mean Charlotte and Emily (for Anne shews but slight traces of the family genius), and they might class the writings of both sisters together because, much as they differ when studied in detail, yet, if compared with any other novels, they seem drawn into so close a relation as almost to appear the product of the same mind.

Into this glorious hierarchy the Brontës are admitted upon the smallest number of novels, Charlotte with three (for *The Professor*, whatever its merits, could hardly win a place among the foremost) and Emily with one; and this not for their promise, but for their achievement alone. There is in their writing a quality that is unique among our novelists, and is of a priceless kind. By the passionate intensity with which they reveal their inner experience, they give to their work an essentially lyrical character, raising it to the realm of poetry. Other novelists have, it is true, used their experience in a more or less disguised form, as material for their books, and are, in a measure, consciously or unconsciously autobiographical. Experience, or sympathy born of experience, is the only touchstone by which they can test the reality of their creations; but for the very reason,

perhaps, that their own world is more comprehensive than that of the Brontës, it has made a less vivid impression upon their work. They dissipate their energies; the richer their knowledge of other men than themselves, and the broader their sympathies, the less vividly is their personality revealed, till they come to lose themselves in characters widely different from their own; and however individual their style and mannerisms as authors, they are able to baffle our search for themselves. In other words, the ideal of narrative with most writers tends towards the ideal and methods of the drama. With the Brontës it is otherwise. Whatever their theme we never get far away from their haunting presence. Though they may never draw upon the facts of their lives with the same literalness that distinguishes *David Copperfield*, for example, among the works of Dickens, we feel the restless soul of Emily on every page of *Wuthering Heights*, of Charlotte in *Jane Eyre*, *Shirley* and *Villette*. In their work we are admitted to the heart of the writer in a manner which has no parallel outside lyric poetry.

The fact is all the more striking in that they had little of the actual gift of the poet. Of the volume of verse with which they made their first appearance as authors, two copies were sold, and I do not think the world left it alone with undue severity. There is little in the volume of originality, little of distinction. Those few poems of Emily's that are fit to stand beside *Wuthering Heights* were not published until after her death; and no one could detect in the earlier book the sign of that power which was soon to manifest itself in the novel. Theirs was a genius which found no scope in the accepted forms of poetic expression; just as, on the other hand, the intense passion of their conceptions was beyond the ordinary limit of prose narrative.

The poetic atmosphere which broods over their writings is not usually characteristic of the novel. Jane Austen is totally deficient in it, as, perhaps, pure comedy must always be. Scott, in some of his scenes and characters, has certainly attained to it—far more often, I think, in his novels than in his tales in verse—but his great sphere is, after all, the prose Epic. Dickens often attempted it, but his touch was not sure and he often failed to gain it; and Thackeray, intensely critical of his character as of his art, only allowed himself to enter it in

moments of intense dramatic climax. Of Meredith and George Eliot much the same is true. Meredith, a genuine poet, with superb mastery of metrical form and expression, had no need to use his novel for the purposes of lyrical utterance; George Eliot, who in this matter is certainly nearest to the Brontës, had yet a wider sphere than theirs. The poetry of her novels, like that of other novelists, is for the most part objective; it rises out of the dramatic situation, and with that situation departs. But the works of the Brontës are conceived in that rarer atmosphere of high intellectuality, impregnated with deep passion, in which great poetry has its source, and it is only there that they can breathe freely and be at home.

It would be vain to deny that as novelists they pay dear for this peculiarity. Emily's one novel is not free from glaring improbabilities and crudities of detail, patent enough to the least critical observer, proving her to be often incompetent to portray the more pedestrian side of life. "I wonder if the analysis of other fictions read as absurdly as that of *Jane Eyre* always does?" wrote Charlotte with engaging frankness (*Charlotte Brontë and her Circle*, p. 335), and the answer to her query seems to be that *Villette*, with its flimsy ghost episode, much too slight to bear its emotional weight in the story, runs it very hard. I doubt whether in the whole of our classic fiction there are any speeches so truly ludicrous as those in which Mr. Rochester lays bare his character to Jane, except the conversations of Lady Ingram to her "queenly Blanche." Miss Brontë had seen quite enough, even of high life, to know better than this. Her conception of her *dramatis personæ* is nearly always true; the manner she chooses to reveal them is often false to life and crudely inartistic. With her searching gaze she has plucked the heart out of their mystery; she knows them for what they are, and knowing them, she is often careless as to the means she takes to delineate them to us. The greatest artist submits to the conditions of his material; he is infinitely careful of his detail, and like the dyer, subdues his hand to what it works in. Charlotte Brontë was too little of an artist for this, and her books are only redeemed from falsity by the essential truth of her imaginative conception. The whole tenour of her works, in its defects as in its merits, is summed up in the impatient exclamation of Shirley to her horrified and worldly-minded uncle: "Oh, Uncle!

there is nothing really valuable in this world, there is nothing glorious in the world to come, that is not poetry" (*Shirley*, ch. xxxi.) Hence the whole drama of her books is woven around characters and situations through which she is able to express with absolute directness her own conceptions of life, so that the emotion of her novel often passes into a strain of pure lyric song, in which the author, speaking of her inner experience, interprets the passion that inspired her works. Consequently these novels, except in form, have far more affinity with the writings of the early 19th century, a period that Charlotte herself regarded as "the golden age of poetry," than with any contemporary literature. For a parallel to the wild intensity of this lyrical cry which rings through them, we may look in vain since Shelley died. Nothing like their fearless contempt of convention or shams, their blazing scorn of injustice, their passion for freedom, had been written since Byron. Nor, since Wordsworth, had any treatment of nature, which even among the poets of their own day seemed little but an accidental picturesque background, been so deeply impregnated with mysticism and spirituality. Whether they had actually read Shelley or not matters little to us now. But Branwell, apparently, used to quote Shelley's poems, hence we may infer that his sisters knew them also (*v.* Shorter's *Life of Charlotte Brontë*, 1905, p. 97). Certainly they knew Byron well, and Charlotte had the courage, in a not too liberal age, to recommend his poems to a youthful friend; whilst we can well believe that both sisters shared the feelings of Branwell when he addressed Wordsworth as one "whose works I have most loved in our literature and who most has been with me a divinity of the mind." Yet there is nothing in them of imitation; for in none of these things did they need a master. In their attitude to nature they are not disciples of Wordsworth, but living illustrations of the vital truths that Wordsworth was born to reveal. Again for themselves they had to fight out that battle for freedom and for nature, fought, each in his own way, by the poets who preceded them; and if, in their own isolated home, they received no outward impulse to inspire them, they found food in plenty for

> The passion and the life, whose fountains are within.

Their life at Haworth is familiar to you all, but you must pardon me if I recall to you, for purposes of illustration, some of its main features.

I will ask you to picture them first in the year 1824, when Charlotte, the third of a family of six, is eight years old. They have no mother; her place is supplied, as far as a mother's place can be supplied, by an aunt, for whom we are told they "had that kind of affection which is generated by esteem." (Mrs. Gaskell, *Life*, ch. iv.) Their father, affectionate and proud of his offspring in his own strange way, is nevertheless little able to enter into their lives, or to understand and take his share in the trivialities that form so important a part of their interests. A scholar and a recluse, one, moreover, chastened by indigestion, he even takes his meals alone, isolated from his family at the one time when easy conversation is possible, simply because conversation is not the primary object of the gathering; though a man of strong passions, inheriting, with his first blood, that weird Celtic imagination which he transmitted in due course to his son and two of his daughters, he practised a stern self-repression, and thereby only intensified the feeling for which his strong sense of duty allowed him no outlet. And the kitchen affords the children no freer intercourse than the study. It is presided over by a cook possessed of all those admirable qualities that the name of Tabitha inevitably suggests, and devoted to the family, especially to Charlotte (who was already remarkable for her sweetness of temper and her unselfish thought for others), but "always on her guard in what she said before such a clever little child." (*Ibid*, ch. iii.)

No society from without comes to swell the little circle. Mr. Brontë seems to receive no guests but curates, and apparently there are no other children within miles. What wonder, then, that the brother and sisters are all in all to one another, that their affections, losing nothing by dissipation, are intenser than ordinary, and become so deeply rooted that no later ties can take their place. And if, thus circumstanced, they care little for toys, but delight prematurely in literature and spend their time and imaginations in writing and acting little plays for their own delectation, they are as bright and happy, in their own way, as other and more normal children are in theirs. They are left alone, and they early learn that passion for liberty which was the master passion of their lives. And when they feel the need of fresh air, they can sally forth hand in hand for walks on the solitary moors, white with snow in winter and in the summer brilliant with purple

heather. The picture which they present perforce to the mind is strikingly Wordsworthian in its pathos and in its beauty. The loneliness, the isolation of the scene, suggests the character of the world the little pilgrims were soon to traverse, and not a little of its spirit passes into their souls.

Let us glance at them again some six years later. The bitter experience at Cowan Bridge has intervened; they have learnt something of the cruelty and injustice of the world, something too of the remorseless and inexplicable hand of fate. Two of their number have been removed by death, and Charlotte is now the eldest, with those responsibilities of motherhood that the protective instincts of an elder sister are ever ready to assume. No outward change in her life is visible. But sorrow has matured her already precocious genius beyond her childish years, so that she spends her time with the dead almost as much as with the living; for her vivid imagination lends reality and horror to the dreams in which, after long years, she seems to meet her lost sisters, whom Time has changed so that they cannot greet her with the ready sympathy of old. For the rest, the home circle is as self-contained as ever—its one relaxation the ceaseless rivalry in literary composition—poetry, romance and political article alike appealing to their youthful fancies; whilst they now find a deeper and more mysterious echo to their natures in the hills and moors over which they roam.

Let us picture them once more some fifteen years later, about the time at which their great works were first conceived. Their life is still outwardly uneventful and commonplace, and the casual visitor to Haworth Vicarage would merely regard them as silent, somewhat colourless young women, punctilious in the performance of every household duty, but otherwise without distinction, shy and awkward in company, and to all appearance completely limited by the narrow interests of their home. But years ago their battle with life had begun in bitter earnest, and the sufferings which they have undergone are redoubled in intensity by the fierce imagination which consumes them and the quick sensibilities with which they are endowed. Conscious that if they would be provident for the future they must set about earning a livelihood, they have turned to literature, their sole ambition; but they have only met with discouragement and disappointment, and they have been obliged to resort to governesship

the only profession for which they were technically qualified, the one for which they were by disposition and inclination absolutely unfit. To Emily indeed it has proved impossible. Three times in her life has she been absent from home and obliged to return, broken down in health with longing for Haworth and the moors. Charlotte and Anne have been able physically to stand the test of separation, and Charlotte has even made friends, but these cannot take the place in her heart of her absent sisters, nor understand, as they alone could understand, the hidden depths of her nature. "I am not like you" she writes to the dearest of her friends, whose character differed from hers something as Horatio's from Hamlet's, "if you knew my thoughts, the dreams that absorb me, the fiery imagination that at times eats me up and makes me feel society, as it is, wretchedly insipid, you would pity and I daresay despise me." (Letter to Miss Nussey quoted by Mrs. Gaskell, *Life*, ch. viii.) And she often suffered, among strange faces, untold anguish of loneliness. But now the sisters are at home together, and they lie awake through many a stormy winter's night listening in terror to the fury of their drunken brother, on whose brilliant genius the family hopes had once been centred; conscious of their own frailty of body, which might at any time summon another of themselves away from that narrow circle which seemed as though it could bear no further loss. What must have been their mood as they reviewed the sorrows of the past and of the present, not daring to expect a better lot in the future? Well might they fall into utter despair. But their nature was too deep for that. Their unflinching faith, if it could not save them from a constant morbidity of mind, itself the inherent defect of their great qualities, gave them a profound belief in the spiritual value of suffering. Emily's courage, we are told, was invincible, and her mind grew in force as her body weakened. Charlotte wrote in her hour of deepest anguish, "How I pity those whom sorrow stuns instead of rousing!" (Letter to Miss Nussey, quoted in Mrs. Gaskell's *Life*). To them as to all great souls, life was an activity, and emotion its greatest stimulus. "Your heart is a lyre," said Caroline to Robert Moore, in *Shirley*, "but the lot of your life has not been a minstrel to sweep it, and it is often silent." Their's might have been silent too, had not Our Lady of Sorrow plagued them until she had unfolded the capacity of their spirit. In their own life, partly through duty to those they loved, partly through

courage, partly through independence, they practised a stern repression; in their art alone they revealed their exultations, their agonies, their unconquerable mind.

"This hag, this Reason," says Charlotte under the guise of Lucy Snowe, "would not let me look up, or smile or hope; she could not rest unless I were altogether crushed, cowed, broken-in, and broken-down. According to her, I was born only to work for a piece of bread, to await the pains of death, and steadily all through life to despond. Reason might be right; yet no wonder we are glad at times to defy her, to rush from under her rod and give a truant hour to Imagination—*her* soft, bright foe, *our* sweet Help, our divine Hope. We shall and must break bounds at intervals, despite the terrible revenge that awaits our return. Reason is vindictive as a devil. . . . Long ago I should have died of her illusage: her stint, her chill, her barren board. her icy bed, her savage, ceaseless blows; but for that kinder Power who holds my secret and sworn allegiance. Often has Reason turned me out by night, in mid-winter, on cold snow . . . —harshly denied my right to ask better things. . . . Then, looking up, have I seen in the sky a head amidst circling stars, of which the midmost and the brightest lent a ray sympathetic and attent. A spirit, softer and better than Human Reason, has descended with quiet flight to the waste . . . —bringing perfume of flowers which cannot fade—fragrance of trees whose fruit is life; bringing breezes pure from a world whose day needs no sun to lighten it. My hunger has this good angel appeased with food, sweet and strange, gathered amongst gleaning angels, garnering their dew-white harvest in the first fresh hour of a heavenly day; tenderly has she assuaged the insufferable tears which weep away life itself—kindly given rest to deadly weariness—gently lent hope and impulse to paralyzed despair. Divine, compassionate, succourable influence! When I bend the knee to other than God, it shall be at thy white and winged feet, beautiful on mountain or on plain." (*Villette*, ch. xxi.)

It is natural for such natures to seek relief in the literary expression of those aspirations which in their life find little scope for fulfilment. They "borrow of Imagination what Reality will not give," and work out for themselves that emancipation from harassing convention, from the "weary weight of all this unintelligible world," which found but little utterance in their own time.

What had they in common with contemporary novelists, who for the most part drew their materials from the conventional society of the day—critical of it, doubtless, but in the main accepting its limitations with equanimity, as adequate for their purposes? What wonder that their writings throb with the passion which is from within? Their conception of art indeed is clearly enunciated in Caroline Helstone's criticism of Cowper's tragic poem, *The Castaway*, for obvious reasons a favourite with all the Brontës. "Cowper was nearly broken-hearted when he wrote that poem, and it almost breaks one's heart to read it. But he found relief in writing it—I know he did: and that gift of poetry—the most divine bestowed on man—was, I believe, granted to allay emotions when their strength threatens harm. It seems to me, Shirley, that nobody should write poetry to exhibit intellect or attainment. Who cares for that sort of poetry? . . . And who does not care for feeling—real feeling—however simply, even rudely expressed?" (*Shirley*, ch. xii.)

"Feeling, real feeling," is the domain in which the Brontës hold sway. To them all great art was poetry, and only poetry was worthy the name of art. When Lewes recommended Charlotte Brontë to study Jane Austen as "one of the greatest artists, of the greatest painters of human character and one of the writers with the nicest sense of means to an end, that ever lived," her reply was characteristic. "That last point only will I ever acknowledge. Can there be a great artist without poetry? . . . What I will bend to, as a great artist . . . cannot be destitute of the divine gift" (Letter to G. H. Lewes, quoted in Mrs. Gaskell's *Life*, ch. xvi.), and in a letter to Williams, her more sympathetic correspondent, she writes at greater length.

"Miss Austen does her business of delineating the surface of the lives of genteel English people curiously well. . . . She ruffles her reader by nothing vehement, disturbs him by nothing profound. The passions are perfectly unknown to her; she rejects even a speaking acquaintance with that stormy sisterhood. . . . What sees keenly, speaks aptly, moves flexibly, it suits her to study; but what throbs fast and full, though hidden, what the blood rushes through, what is the unseen seat of life and the sentient target of death—this Miss Austen ignores. She no more, with her mind's eye, beholds the heart of her race than each man, with bodily vision, sees the heart in

his heaving breast. Jane Austen was a complete and most sensible lady, but a very incomplete and rather insensible . . woman. If this is heresy, I cannot help it. If I said it to some people, they would directly accuse me of advocating exaggerated heroics, but I am not afraid of your falling into any such vulgar error." *Charlotte Brontë and her Circle*, pp. 399-400).

Let us not fall into it either. It was the peculiar appeal which art made to her nature that led her to write as she did, so that she might ease her heart in writing. Indeed, in contrast with Miss Austen, the genius of the Brontës stands out in most striking relief. Doubtless each might have learnt something from the other; but it was essential to the genius of each that she should be incapable of learning the lesson; and instead of deploring the lack of depth in *Pride and Prejudice*, and the lack of artistic finish in *Jane Eyre*, we are better employed in appreciating them for what they are and trying to understand the causes of the contrast between them. It was not wholly due to environment. Different as were the Yorkshire towns and villages, known to Miss Brontë, from the village of Steventon in Hampshire and from Bath, they might have afforded opportunities for art of a similar kind. The models on whom Charlotte Brontë drew for her Wynnes, her Sykeses, and her Ingrams could equally well have served Jane Austen for her Thorpes, Bertrams, and Dashwoods. Curates, pompously vulgar as Mr. Collins, pretentious as Mr. Elton, in whose society Jane Austen would have been equally at ease, lay thick upon the hills of Yorkshire. But characters completely satisfying to that genius for delicate and humourous observation in which Miss Austen has no rival, move Miss Brontë to a laughter never for long unmingled with scorn. She is revolted by their dull animal insensibility and she repays them with no light chastisement, using them as a foil to set off her deeper purpose and to enforce in deadly earnest the contrast between their lower level and her world of high passions and searching meditation. As an illustration of this, let us refer to that inimitable seventh chapter of *Shirley*. Its title, "The Curates at Tea," at once brings to the mind situations in which we have all of us delighted. We have visions of the three curates drinking wine with Mr. Helstone, the vacant cackle of their voices penetrating the closed door. We are present with Caroline at the arrival of Mrs. Sykes, the tall bilious woman who made an

ample and not altogether insincere profession of piety, and of the three showy Misses Sykes, on all of whose faces was stamped the characteristic mark of an English country gentlewoman, a certain expression which seems to say, "I know, I do not boast of it, but *I know* that I am the standard of what is proper." We listen to their conversation of Jew baskets and the missionary address delivered by Dr. Broadbent, such a beautiful speaker, though he *was* like a butcher in appearance, and watch their preparation for departure and their rapid change of front when they hear that there is other company, for they "always like to meet the clergy." We move to the kitchen, and mark the perturbation of the worthy cook Eliza; taken unawares, yet nobly rising to the occasion, with a timely addition to her store of muffins from round the corner, and we sit down with the company to a good Yorkshire tea, taken round the table, sitting well to it, with our knees duly introduced under the mahogany. We can hardly listen to the courteous banter with which our host entertains his lady guests, for our delight in watching the attempts of the various curates to shew themselves to advantage. Nor do we hesitate in awarding the palm of absurdity to Mr. Donne, who keeps us all waiting long after signs of impatience have been manifested all round, till the chairs have been pushed back and the talk has flagged. "He seemed to think that this isolated position of his gave him somehow a certain importance; that it was dignified and stately to be the last; that it was grand to keep all the others waiting. So long did he linger, that the very urn died: it ceased to hiss." At length, however, the old Rector got impatient. "For whom are we waiting?" he asked. "For me, I believe," returned Donne complacently; appearing to think it much to his credit that a party should thus be kept dependent on his movements. "Tut," cried Helstone: then standing up, "Let us return thanks," said he, which he did forthwith, and all quitted the table." How vivid it all is, how Jane Austen would have revelled in it! nay, if she had been called upon to rewrite it, we doubt whether she would have added much to its charm. But whereas in her the absurdity of the Sykeses, and the Donnes would have been shown against the absurdity of others; the only contrast lying in our power, if we possess it, of observing a contrast between themselves and us; to Charlotte Brontë it is but a comic interlude in a chapter of far more serious import. It opens with a

characteristically beautiful lament on the contrast between the illusions of youth and the realities of life.

"Caroline Helstone was just 18 years old; and at 18 the true narrative of life is yet to be commenced. Before that time, we sit listening to a tale, a marvellous fiction; . . . our world is heroic; its inhabitants half-divine or semi-demon; its scenes are dream-scenes; darker woods and stranger hills; brighter skies, more dangerous waters . . . drearier deserts, sunnier fields than are found in nature, overspread our enchanted globe. What a moon we gaze on before that time! How the trembling of our hearts at her aspect bears witness to its unutterable beauty! As to our sun, it is a burning heaven—the world of gods.

At that time—at 18 . . . Elf-land lies behind us, the shores of Reality rise in front. These shores are yet distant: they look so blue, soft, gentle, we long to reach them. . . . Could we but reach this land, we think to hunger and thirst no more; whereas many a wilderness, and often the flood of Death, or some stream of sorrow as cold and almost as black as Death, is to be crossed ere true bliss can be tasted. Every joy that life gives must be earned ere it is secured; and how hardly earned, those only know who have wrestled for great prizes. . . . At 18, we are not aware of this. Hope . . . is implicitly believed;—Love, when he comes wandering like a lost angel to our door, is at once admitted, welcomed, embraced: his quiver is not seen: if his arrows penetrate, their wound is like a thrill of new life: there are no fears of poison, none of the barb which no leech's hand can extract . . . in short, at 18, the school of Experience is to be entered. . . . Alas, Experience! No other mentor has so wasted and frozen a face as yours: none wears a robe so black, none bears a rod so heavy. . . . It is by your instructions alone that man or woman can ever find a safe track through life's wilds; without it, how they stumble, how they stray!"

And the main object of this chapter, entitled "The Curates at Tea," is to lead Caroline Helstone from the dreamland of youth into the bitter world of reality. Yesterday, it seemed that her cousin, Robert Moore, returned her love, and her thoughts turn naturally to the fulfilment of her dream in marriage; but a conversation with her cynical uncle, who reckons the performance of

the nuptial ceremony as the most hateful of his parish duties, "because one does not like to act as accessory to the commission of a piece of pure folly," leads on to another meeting with Robert, who repels her naïve affection with coldness and indifference. And again the lyrical note breaks out—its theme the anguish of a slighted woman's love. "You held out your hand for an egg, and fate put into it a scorpion. Show no consternation: close your fingers firmly upon the gift: let it sting through your palm. Never mind: in time, after your hand and arm have swelled and quivered long with torture, the squeezed scorpion will die, and you will have learned the great lesson how to endure without a sob. For the whole remnant of your life, if you survive the test—some, it is said, die under it—you will be stronger, wiser, less sensitive."

From reflections such as these, we are roused by a ring of the bell, and the heavy tread of the first curate is heard upon the stair. The scene follows which I have already described, continuing till Caroline forsakes her duties as hostess to this distasteful company, and seeking refuge in the dining room, again meets Robert Moore. But experience has taught her her first lesson, and she realises now that he is to be only 'cousin' Robert; and as the chapter closes, we feel the pathos of the fading from a foolish, but innocent and beautiful life, of the buoyancy of youthful hope.

Into such an atmosphere, pregnant with deep feeling, are the curates introduced. It is no wonder that they cut a poor figure in it, that the humour with which they are invested slips not seldom into irony, that our laughter at them is tinged with satire. For they belong to that dull insensible section of the world—a large section—which Miss Brontë views with unmitigated scorn.

"The true poet," she writes, "quiet externally though he may be, has often a truculent spirit under his placidity, and is full of shrewdness in his meekness, and can measure the whole stature of those who look down on him, and correctly ascertain the weight and value of the pursuits they disdain him from not having followed. He is happy that he can have his own bliss, his own society with his great friend and goddess, Nature, quite independent of those who find little pleasure in him, and in whom he finds no pleasure at all. It is just, that while the world

and circumstances often turn a dark, cold side to him—and properly too, because he first turns a dark, cold careless side to them—he should be able to maintain a festal brightness . . . in his bosom. . . . Even when utilitarians sit in judgment on him, and pronounce him and his art useless, he hears the sentence with such a hard derision, such a broad, deep, comprehensive, and merciless contempt of the unhappy Pharisees who pronounce it, that he is rather to be chidden than condoled with." (*Shirley*, ch. iv.)

The intimacy with which the poetic temperament is here revealed and the very limitations of conception, with emphasis laid upon the poet's isolation and his contempt for the Pharisee, proclaim it a piece of indubitable autobiography. It would hardly explain the comprehensive and widely tolerant art of Shakespeare, who turned a dark, cold, careless side to no one, and found pleasure in all, but it is true enough of the Brontës, and it explains much both in their lives and their writings.

Yet it is well for us that poets differ in kind and not merely in degree. It was this intolerance, this "truculent spirit beneath her placidity," which joined Miss Brontë to the ranks of those heroic souls who, in whatever time, have fought the great battle for freedom. Her impatience against the absurdities of conventional opinion, her hatred of the cant and hypocrisy by which society bolsters up its tottering respectability, her rebellion against its injustice, are dictated by the same spirit as inspired "a man's a man for a' that" and the address "to the unco guid." She might call herself a Tory, and be faithful throughout life to her hero-worship of the Duke of Wellington—politics were not her sphere—but the only aristocracy to which her heart paid homage was the aristocracy of passionate souls. She drew no perfect character, and did not desire to draw one; but her heroes and heroines are all redeemed in her eyes by their great capacity for love.

> They who inspire it most are fortunate,
> . . . : but those who feel it most
> Are happier still, after long sufferings.

And so, for the conventional ordinances prescribed by man she would substitute the laws of divine and natural instinct. This is the motive of *Jane Eyre*. Everyone remembers the burning words with which Jane addresses Mr. Rochester on what she believes to be the eve of his

betrothal to Miss Ingram.—"I tell you I must go!" I retorted, roused to something like passion. "Do you think I can stay to become nothing to you? Do you think I am an automaton?—a machine without feelings? and can bear to have my morsel of bread snatched from my lips, and my drop of living water dashed from my cup? Do you think, because I am poor, obscure, plain and little, I am soulless and heartless? You think wrong!—I have as much soul as you,—and full as much heart! And if God had gifted me with some beauty, and much wealth, I should have made it as hard for you to leave me, as it is now for me to leave you. I am not talking to you now through the medium of custom, conventionalities, or even of mortal flesh:—it is my spirit that addresses your spirit: just as if both had passed through the grave and we stood at God's feet, equal—as we are!" (*Jane Eyre*, ch. xxiii.).

In the realm of passionate love, ardent as the flame, and as the flame pure, consuming all grosser earthly passion till it becomes something essentially spiritual in its nature, the effluence of soul to soul, Charlotte Brontë stands supreme. There is nothing like it in any other novelist, for no other had felt it as she had done. Hence she does not approach life from the conventional standpoint of society, and if we so approach her we fail to catch the inspiration of her ideal. But she has seen enough of the world to discover what ails it, she has passed through enough sorrow to know where alone is consolation, she has been curbed, baffled, constrained enough to know where lies the only escape from the fetters of cruel circumstances. Love is to her the consummation of all that man can dream of for earth—a foretaste of all that he may hope for hereafter. It is the atmosphere

Of the sun's fire, filling the living world.

But society thinks otherwise; it has its own ideals of prudence, and peerages, and worldly advancement and commercial prosperity, and it stigmatises enthusiasm for an ideal which is not its own as melodramatic fustian and bad taste, if nothing worse. The *Quarterly Review*, you will remember, that organ of respectable opinion which had denounced all the greatest poets of the preceding age, was quick in falling upon the Brontës.—"We do not hesitate to say," so ran its verdict, "that the tone of mind and thought which has overthrown authority and violated every code, human and divine,

abroad, and has fostered Chartism and rebellion at home, is the same which wrote *Jane Eyre*." And if you see no distinction between the human and the divine code, at the same time refusing to recognise the right of rebellion to those who do see it, I do not think you have any reason to quarrel with the *Quarterly Review*.

But the idealist, finding little sympathy with his aspirations and little support in his revolt in the world about him, is always prone to take refuge in nature; and so to gain the solace that is elsewhere denied him The Brontës were no exception; their innate passion for nature, elsewhere without parallel in our literature outside its acknowledged poets, was a dominant characteristic of their childhood and ever gained over them a deeper and more mysterious sway.

"My sister Emily," wrote Charlotte, "loved the moors. Flowers brighter than the rose bloomed in the blackest of the heath for her; out of a sullen hollow in a livid hillside her mind could make an Eden." (Preface to *Poems* of Ellis and Acton Bell). And again, "her native hills were far more to her than a spectacle; they were what she lived in and by as much as the wild birds their tenants, or as the heather their produce." (Preface to *Wuthering Heights*). And upon the elder sister, despite her wider vision and more varied experience, the effect of the moors was in nowise different. It is not without significance that when *Jane Eyre*, by loyalty to her highest instincts, has become an homeless outcast, with no place to lay her head, she is guided to a moorland country.

"I touched the heath; it was dry and yet warm with the heat of the summer day. I looked at the sky; it was pure; a kindly star twinkled just above the chasm ridge. The dew fell, but with propitious softness; no breeze whispered. Nature seemed to me benign and good; I thought she loved me, outcast as I was; and I who from man could anticipate only mistrust, rejection, insult, clung to her with filial fondness . . . Beside the crag, the heath was very deep: when I lay down my feet were buried in it; rising high on each side, it left only a narrow space for the night air to invade . . . . Night was come, and her planets were risen: a safe still night; too serene for the companionship of fear. We know that God is everywhere,

but certainly we feel His presence most when His works are on the grandest scale spread before us; and it is in the unclouded night sky, when His worlds wheel their silent course, that we read clearest His infinitude, His omnipotence, His omnipresence. I had risen to my knees to pray for Mr. Rochester. Looking up, I, with tear-dimmed eyes, saw the mighty Milky way. Remembering what it was—what countless systems there swept space like a soft trace of light—I felt the might and strength of God . . . . I again nestled to the breast of the hill, and ere long, in sleep, forgot sorrow" (*Jane Eyre*, ch. xxviii). These are the words of Jane Eyre, but the soul is the soul of Charlotte Brontë. It is indeed among the magnificent forces of nature that the sense of infinity is most truly felt, that we may cry with Emily:—

> Vain are the thousand creeds
> That move men's hearts—unutterably vain.

that our petty ambitions seem most trivial, that the road of sorrows that weighs us down is unaccountably lifted, so that we see into the life of things, and thereby learn humility and gain consolation.

But most of us miss the great lessons of nature by declining to submit to her conditions. We too often take into the country the associations of the town, and refusing to cast them off, do not allow nature the sole place in our regard. "Imprimis" Miss Brontë tells us "we forget nature; and then nature forgets us; covers her vast calm brow with a dim veil, conceals her face, and withdraws the peaceful joy with which, if we had been content to worship her only, she would have filled our hearts." (*Shirley*, ch. xii.) The Brontës knew better than this. Their sole companion as Charlotte has beautifully put it was Solitude, "Solitude descending from lone mountain passes—something of the blue mist of the hills in her array, and of their chill breeze in her breath—much also of their solemn beauty in her mien." (*Shirley*, ch. xxix) And they had their reward. In fact, these moors, with the winds that swept them, and the sky above their head, with its ever-shifting lights and shadows, and their colours, changing with the season, but always beautiful, always impressive, were the one vital influence upon the lives of the Brontës; that potent force which, combining, and combining with singular fitness, with the chastening experience of sorrow, made up their education. Books in comparison were nothing to them—society was nothing to them, and

their deep religious sense, as we have seen, cannot be separated from them. It was this that made the Brontës true daughters of Yorkshire. How is it that you in Yorkshire regard them as peculiarly your own? Surely it is not the mere accident of their birth-place. No drop of north country blood coursed in their veins. It is not even their loyalty to the land of their birth, their love of its people, their rage at the impertinences of those who thought themselves more refined. It is rather that their genius, receptive of impression, as is all genius, drank in the spirit of the place, so that in their single life-times they obtained the virtue from it, which slowly through generations has made you what you are. "Poets" says Shelley "the best of them, are a very cameleonic race; they take the colour, not only of what they feed on, but of the very leaves under which they pass." But the genius which made this possible for the Brontës led them far deeper into the mysteries of nature. Not only freedom, independence of thought and action, hatred of all pretence and sham, came to them from this communion, but by reason of their closer intimacy they learnt to associate the stern hand of fate that often lay heavy upon their heads with the immutable laws of nature, and to see in both the same divine mind working out its inexorable intent. Duty, to them so stern a law-giver, was but the conscious submission on the part of man to the same laws as give to nature her beauty and her strength; and with Wordsworth they could cry aloud, with no mere idle fancy, but as a vital truth—

> Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong
> And the most ancient heavens thro' Thee are fresh and strong.

Thus they drew the worlds of nature and of man closer together: nature to them became instinct with life, and its spirit capable of definite communication with man, sympathising with him, chastening him, exalting him, exercising a potent sway over the moulding of his destiny, becoming, if not a conscious, at least a definite and a palpable actor in the drama of human life In *Villette* the death of Lucy's early protectress is heralded by the storms which after a calm winter were ushering in the spring, and this wind now wailing at her windows is but the prelude to that storm with which *Villette* closes; when the destroying angel of tempest achieved his perfect work; and the sun returned and brought no light for Lucy, for the

ocean held fast Paul Emanuel, her lover, her only friend. So in *Jane Eyre*, Rochester, triumphant in his newly gained love, defies what seems to him merely the judgment of a world which he contemns. "But what had befallen the night? The moon was not yet set, and we were all in shadow: I could scarcely see my master's face, near as I was. And what ailed the chesnut tree? it writhed and groaned; while the wind roared in the laurel walk, and came sweeping over us. . . . . Then a livid vivid spark leapt out of a cloud at which I was looking, and there was a crack, a crash, and a close rattling peal: and I thought only of hiding my dazzled eyes against Mr. Rochester's shoulder" (*Jane Eyre*, ch. xxiii.) And that same mysterious power which gave this warning, at first unheeded but afterwards obeyed by Jane with heroic resolution, called her at last to join her master, delivering her before it was too late from a sacrifice of natural instincts upon the altar of mistaken duty. Over many miles there came to her upon the winds a voice "Jane, Jane, Jane," nothing more. "'Oh! God, what is it?' I gasped. I might have said, 'Where is it?' for it did not seem in the room—nor in the house—nor in the garden; it did not come out of the air—nor from under the earth—nor from overhead. I had heard it—where, or whence, for ever impossible to know! And it was the voice of a human being—a known, loved, well-remembered voice—that of Edward Fairfax Rochester; and it spoke in pain and woe, wildly, eerily, urgently.

'I am coming,' I cried. 'Wait for me. Oh! I will come.' I flew to the door and looked into the passage—it was dark: I ran out into the garden: it was void. 'Where are you?' I exclaimed.

The hills beyond Marsh Glen sent the answer faintly back—'Where are you?' I listened. The wind sighed low in the firs: all was moorland loneliness and midnight hush.

'Down, superstition' I commented, as that spectre rose up black by the black yew at the gate.—"This is not thy deception nor thy witchcraft: it is the work of nature. She was roused and did—no miracle—but her best.'" (*Jane Eyre*, ch. xxxv.)

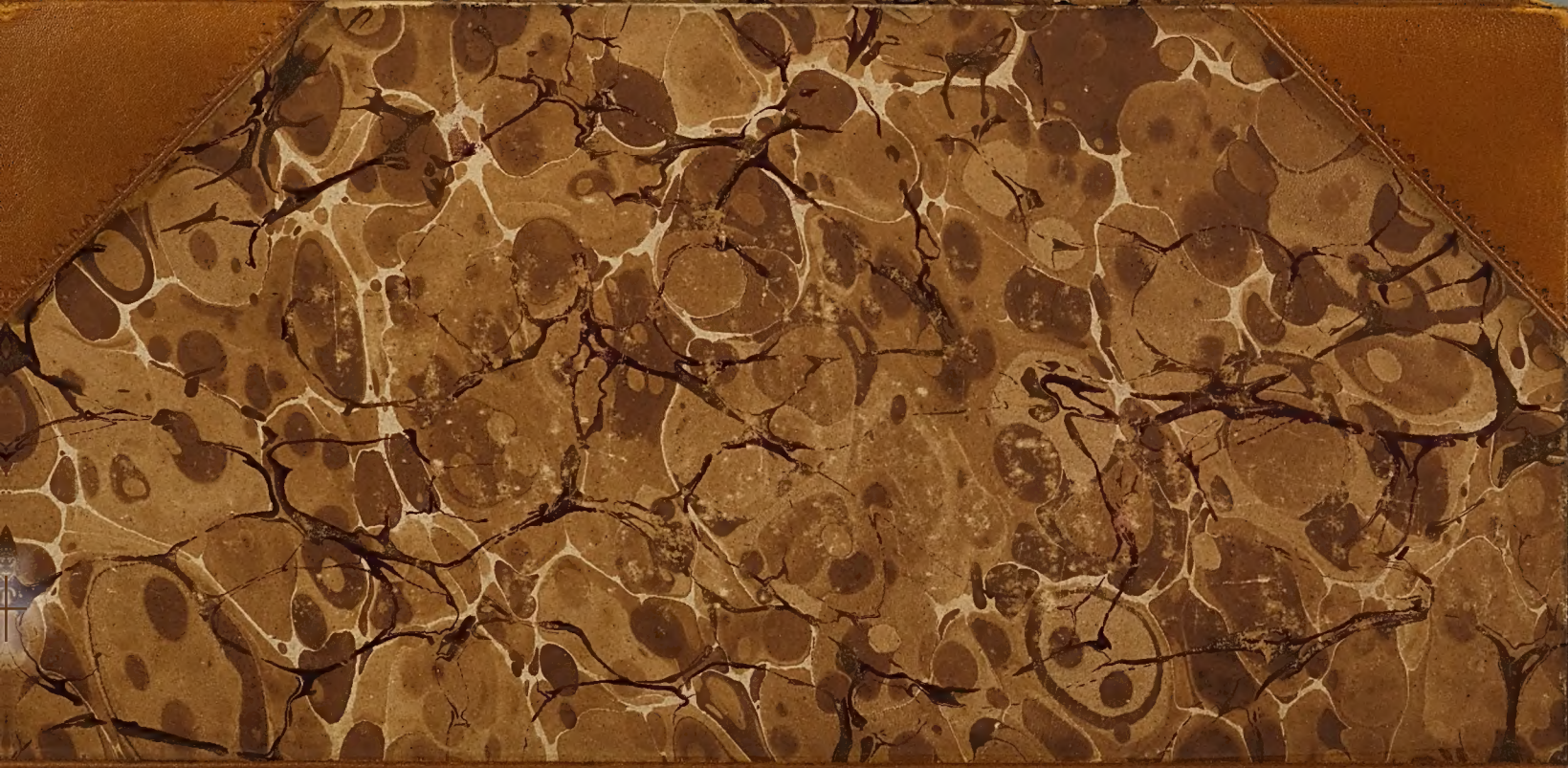
And so Jane goes once more to seek her master.

It is deeply characteristic of Charlotte Brontë that when this supernatural episode was somewhat harshly criticised she defended it as a part of her own experience. "But it is a true thing, it really happened."

And Emily Brontë had long shared this belief. As a child "at twilight in the schoolroom, when the leisure of the evening play hour brought back in full tide the thoughts of home," (*Preface to Selected Poems of Ellis Bell by Charlotte Brontë*), she wrote verses in which "the genius of a solitary region seemed to address his wayward votary and to recall within his influence the proud mind which rebelled at times even against what it most loved," and again to the night wind "which visits an ear which discerned language in its whispers and roused the sleeper on her pillow till the wakened soul struggles to blend with the storm by which it is swayed." Later she pictures herself, again at night, when the house is silent, trimming her lamp to guide to her chamber no earthly lover, but that strange power which comes upon the wings of the wind. From a mind like this, the 'visionary' as she herself calls it, emanated that Titanic work *Wuthering Heights*, in which the characters of Heathcliff and Catherine seem to partake of the elemental forces of nature, wrecking themselves and others in their inability to exercise that control by which the impartial hand of the great mother nature governs her own exclusive domain. It is a tragedy of character as vital in its imaginative truth as it is vivid in its emotional appeal. What scene in our literature is more impressive than the desolate farm house on the Heights with the wind sounding in the blasted fir by the lattice, and the weird voice borne in upon it: "Let me in, let me in, I am Catherine Linton, I have lost my way upon the moor." (*Wuthering Heights*, ch. iii.) And if we would find any fitting parallel for the intense reality with which, in this wonderful book, the worlds of nature and man are brought into harmony like antiphonal strains in a great symphony, the passion within answering to the storm and desolation without, I know not where to seek it save in the scene upon the heath in Shakespeare's sublimest tragedy. This is indeed the work of one who had, as her sister tells us, "a secret power and fire that might have informed the brain and kindled the veins of a hero." And with *Wuthering Heights* in our mind an added significance is given to that superb tribute to her character, "stronger than a man, simpler than a child." For the strength is, as it were, the strength of the tempest, and the simplicity is of the moorland and the stars.

To many readers this poetic treatment of nature seems far from the truth; and assuredly it is very far from

what they see of the truth. But I question whether they have ever given themselves a fair opportunity for forming an opinion—whether, in fact, they are as intimate with nature as, for example, Shelley was, or Wordsworth, or the Brontës. The ordinary argument, supposed to clinch the matter, is that many of those who live in the country are least susceptible to its influence, but this argument is without validity. The ordinary chemist makes no discoveries in chemistry nor the ordinary mechanician in mechanics. It is only genius that is susceptible to new truth and capable of communicating it; and the genius of the Brontës is rich in revelation, not only of the elementary passions of humanity, but also of the mysterious beauty and the significance of the natural world. And this seems to me, at least, their most unique achievement, that they have knit together, as no other novelist has done, the passion of human souls and the world of nature around and beyond them—that world which to them was the unquestionable revelation of Divine power and mystery. Hence, when I call to mind the tempest of their lives, imaged so vividly in their immortal writings, and remember the unfailing refuge and consolation which Nature vouchsafed them, I feel that there is a peculiar suggestiveness in those words with which the imaginary narrator of *Wuthering Heights* recounts his last visit to the graves of Heathcliff and Catherine: "I lingered round them, under that benign sky; watched the moths fluttering among the heath and harebells, listened to the soft wind breathing through the grass and wondered how anyone could ever imagine unquiet slumbers for the sleepers in that quiet earth."



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